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GOREZONE

November 1988 GOREZONE #4

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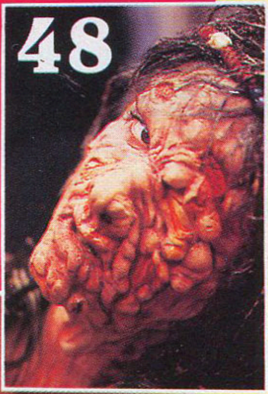

GOREZONE is published six times a year, in Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept. & Nov. by O'Quinn Studios, Inc., 475 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. This is issue #4, Volume 1, (ISSN 0896-8802). Entire contents is copyright © 1988 by O'Quinn Studios, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprint or reproduction of any material in part or in whole without the publishers' written permission is strictly forbidden. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: $15.99 for one year (6 issues) delivered in the U.S. and Canada. Foreign subscriptions: $20.99 in U.S. funds only. **New subscriptions:** send directly to GOREZONE, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. GOREZONE accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photos, art, or other materials, but if free-lance submittals are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, they will be considered and, if necessary, returned. Printed in the U.S.A. GOREZONE is a trademark of O'Quinn Studios, Inc.

BLOOD FEST

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Photo: Copyright 1988 Universal City Studios

To bleed or not to bleed?

Freddy must be wearing a mitten on his right hand these days, I mumbled to myself as I sifted through *hundreds* of photos from *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master*. I'd come uptown to New Line Cinema's offices to select slides on the latest Freddy slayathon and came away bewildered. There was no blood, no splatter, and hardly any gore. Is Freddy going soft on us?

It may be a little early to worry about that, since at presstime (July 1), *Nightmare 4* had just wrapped principal photography and there was a slim chance that more blood would make it in. According to its producers, though, the *Nightmare* movies are definitely moving away from splatter into more fantasy-based realms. The series' plotters made Mr. Krueger more mainstream, which is both good and bad for horror fans: The increased box-office riches will enable New Line to continue with the *Nightmare* movies and produce other horror projects, but true Freddy fans will miss the blood flood of the original Wes Craven classic. *Nightmare 4*, however, is just one of several recent horror films, for one reason or another, missing guts . . .

How many of you cursed aloud while watching *Friday the 13th, Part VII: The New Blood*? Not 'cause they used the same plot again, nor that the screenwriters came up with the most idiotic ending of the century. The sequel failed to deliver the one ingredient that makes Jason's predictable exploits watchable: the blood. With a double-digit body count, you'd expect some splashings of vital bodily fluids, a few hackings of assorted limbs or at least one decapitation to make you jump out of your seat. But we got nothing. *Nada*. The driest *Friday the 13th* ever. In this case, the MPAA spoiled the fun, threatening an X rating and forcing director John Buechler to cut away. *Bad Dreams*, *Dead Heat* and *Brain Damage* also suffered extreme edits after MPAA rulings. A double-standard plainly exists: Rambo and Chuck Norris can get away with mowing down whole countries as long as they don't wear hockey masks. The MPAA did not force anyone to water down their product, but as we know, nobody wants to widely release unrated movies anymore. Call 'em wimps. Where can a gorehound get his fix? Fortunately, there's light at the end of the esophagus.

Even with cuts, *Phantasm II* delivers gobs of grue. The Tall Man and the pallbearer's demises rank as the year's grossest moments on screen thus far. Audiences screamed for more. *Waxwork*, an adequate horror comedy opening this month (see page 24), gets pretty juicy, too, and slipped by the MPAA with very little damage. A mummy crushes a head, vampires and werewolves tear flesh and several annoying teens meet gruesome ends. Forget the silly plot and enjoy *Waxwork*'s gory bits. And on video, *Slugs* and *Stagefright* hit the spot.

For those who like to write letters, drop a note to your favorite video company and let them know that you're willing to *pay* for tapes that restore cut splatter (as IVE did with *Angel Heart*). Ask Paramount Video (5555 Melrose Avenue, LA, CA 90068) to restore *Friday VII*, and tell them that you were disappointed by their truncated release of *Brain Damage*. Perhaps even a small victory like that will alleviate the pain after the MPAA gets through with *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*.

—Anthony Timpone
Editor

PS: While you're at it, politely remind the Motion Picture Association of America (1133 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10036) that you support an A rating for violent horror films.

GUTS!

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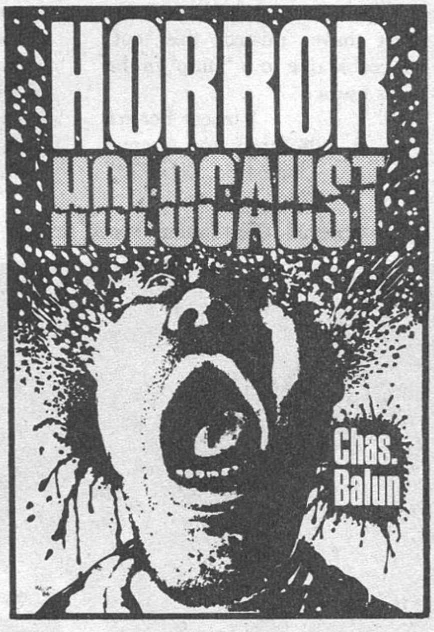
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When was the last time you were *REALLY SCARED?*

GUT reactions

"Demons 2" Debate Rages!

. . . In comparison with the Spanish subtitled version, reviewer Doug Brod says that at least two scenes were cut in the U.S. version of *Demons 2*. Actually, a full six scenes were cut, and I counted a seventh minor cut but haven't compared it directly to the U.S. version to be sure. Included among these is the chestburster scene which your critic maintains is intact in Imperial's cassette. He must have missed this cut, noticeable due to a "jump" in the film's music.

Vincent Pereira
108 Burlington Avenue
Leonardo, NJ 07737

Thanks for Raving!

. . . I am pleased that you have refrained from creating an outright clone of Fango, opting instead to focus on other aspects that are often overlooked. Whereas FANGORIA deals mainly with major studio releases, it appears as though GOREZONE will be the spoilsman for the independents. Great! Lately, the "little guys" have been turning out the best horror films seen in quite a while.

One thing critical to this magazine's success is the large number of reviews to be found. By reading two and three-page reviews of many movies, fans get a broader picture of what's happening in horror. And of course, we can still refer back to Fango for in-depth looks at some of the better movies.

Chas. Balun's "Piece O' Mind" column is without a doubt the most refreshingly opinionated and fun-to-read article of its type, one of the best things in GOREZONE. Keep it!

Blu Gilliand
Route 2, Box 506-A
Deatsville, AL 36022

. . . I just ripped open the second issue of GOREZONE. What a blast! The pictures are just too gross to look at. Well, not really. I'm so glad I finally found a magazine that'll take me beyond human perspective and into an incredible wasteland where everything I could ever ask for is squished together in one solid matter. I can't get enough of the fiction, "Horrorscope," the posters or the totally rad cover! Keep the screams alive, and let the GOREZONE live dead forever!

Chainsaw
4129 Twilight Drive
Kearns, UT

. . . I've just finished reading the second issue of GOREZONE, and I can only say one thing about it: WOW! The cover was really good! That's the best photo of Jason I've seen so far. The article on the movie was also excellent. I think that your idea to have posters in each issue is great and that you should keep on going with them. Hey! How about a GOREZONE poster magazine? But I do have one complaint, GOREZONE only comes out bimonthly, and I can't wait that long.

Marty McCully
485 Harvest Road
Dundas, Ontario
L9H 5E2

. . . I am an avid collector of Fango, your sister magazine, and when I read that a new magazine called GOREZONE was being published, I just couldn't wait. So when I brought home the first copy of GOREZONE and started to read it, I was transported into another dimension, into another world and into a new era. This is the greatest magazine to have been given to the human race since FANGORIA.

Lewis Greenberg
Liverpool, England

FX Lab Cut Down to Size!

. . . I like GOREZONE's format, but it could use a little fine-tuning. I like the idea of Caglione and Drexler's Makeup FX Lab, but instead of concentrating on the where and why, show us *how*! Today's gorehounds want to be more than fans, we want to get involved. Give us some of your technical know-how, some do-it-yourself exercises. Also, show some of the fans' work. A regular showcase of our FX creations would be a hit.

Jeff Walters
Route 1, Box 10-C
Hurdle Mills, NC

Hang in There, Bud!

. . . Nice mag, man! Interesting to note that the "Gore" subgenre of horror has developed such a loyal (if rather demented) following that a publication like FANGORIA no longer fits the bloody bill entirely. (Yes, I know you're doing it to make money, but you wouldn't even attempt it if there wasn't a large contingent of scuzzbuckets like us out here, more than willing to pay the price of admission!)

A point that leads me to this conclusion: We horror fans are *suckers*. If there's a machete, severed head or shining entrail within a five-mile radius, we're there. This has got to stop! I know I speak for many of us

A sharp-eyed GoreZonian spots further cuts in *Demons 2*'s American version.

Photo: Courtesy Maitland McDonagh

when I say, stop making lame-ass sequels! Do something *original*, fachrissakes! Dazzle us! Impress us! Give us another *Re-Animator* (not a remake or sequel, just another new experience like that), *Street Trash* or *Basket Case*.

I'm losing the faith! I'm reverting back to what once was instead of what could be. Stop banging me over the head with the same crap rehashed over and over! I know there's talent out there. You may be reading this right now. . . *help us*!

Dennis Daniel
Long Island, NY

Boo-boo Our Fault!

. . . Congratulations on the fine magazine. Having bought the first two issues, I must say I have learned several new things in both of them. One question, though: In GOREZONE #2's "Piece O' Mind," you guys credit Stan Winston for the makeup FX of the 1981 film *The Boogens*. Correct me if I'm wrong—didn't Bill Munns handle the job?

Bret Arnold
Compton, CA

Oooops! Our mistake, Bret. Boy, are our faces red.

Jason's Mask Won by Canadian Gorezonian!

After years of hearing "Where can I get a mask just like Jason's?", we've finally given the darn thing away. First Place winner Scott Taylor of Ontario, Canada, has become the proud owner of the mask worn by Kane Hodder in Friday the 13th, Part VII: The New Blood.

No less lucky were 15 Second Place winners: Scott Moore of Wheelersburg, OH, Bob Leer of Indianapolis, IN, Craig Neal of Glen Burnie, MD, Jason Anderson of Kingsport, TN, Tim Yawkowy of Whitehall, PA, Marc Cawiezel of Wahiawa, HI, Marc Fountain of Peabody, MA, John Frey of Toledo, OH, Zac Tamburrino of Auburn, NY, Margaret Morrison of West Springfield, MA, Matt Pentecost of Burbank, CA, Chad Armstrong of Long Beach, CA, Tommy Faircloth of Bath, SC, Mark DeLuca of Ontario, Canada and Joe Tenn of Ontario, Canada, all receive huge New Blood *movie posters.*

Don't expect to hear much grumbling from Steven Folger of Clinton, MD, Matthew Maiers of Broomall, PA, Tyrone Moore of Cleveland, OH, Peter Harry Farrar of Brownville, ME, James Cline of Pine Hill, NJ, Tim Tuchrello of Avon, NY, Erik Martinelli of Lincoln, MI, Michael Wulin of Paterson, NJ, David Vee of Massillon, OH, or Ivan Laguerre of Brooklyn, NY. They all got Third Place prizes—autographed photos of Mr. Voorhees himself!

The competition was brutal but worth it. Countless contestants were disqualified for entering more than once; that's what happens when you don't follow rules. Congratulations to all who won, and thank you to all who entered properly. *By the way, the answers were (A-G) 4,5,2,6,2,3,5.*

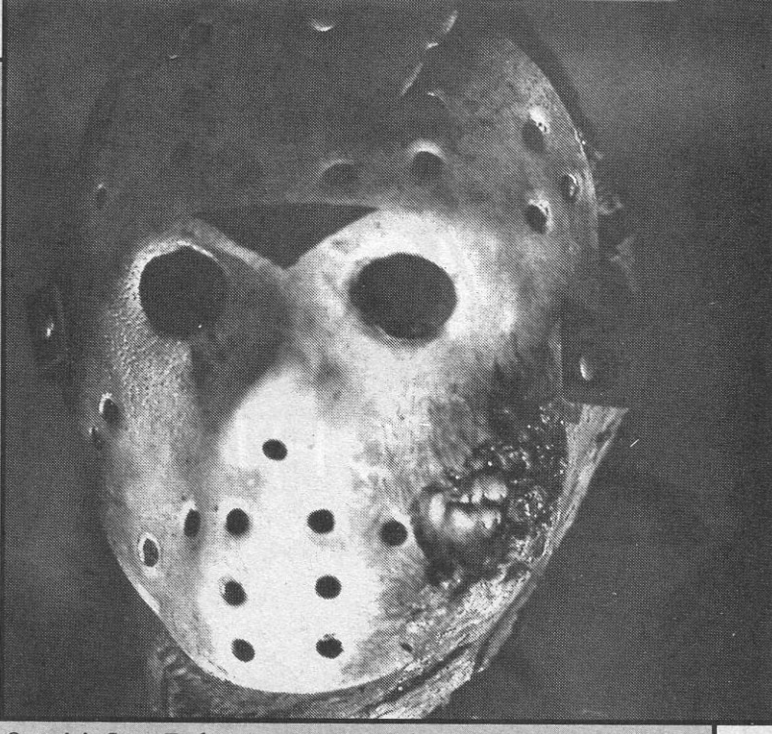


Photo: Paramount Pictures

Ontario's Scott Taylor cops Jason's mask. Wear it in good health, friend.

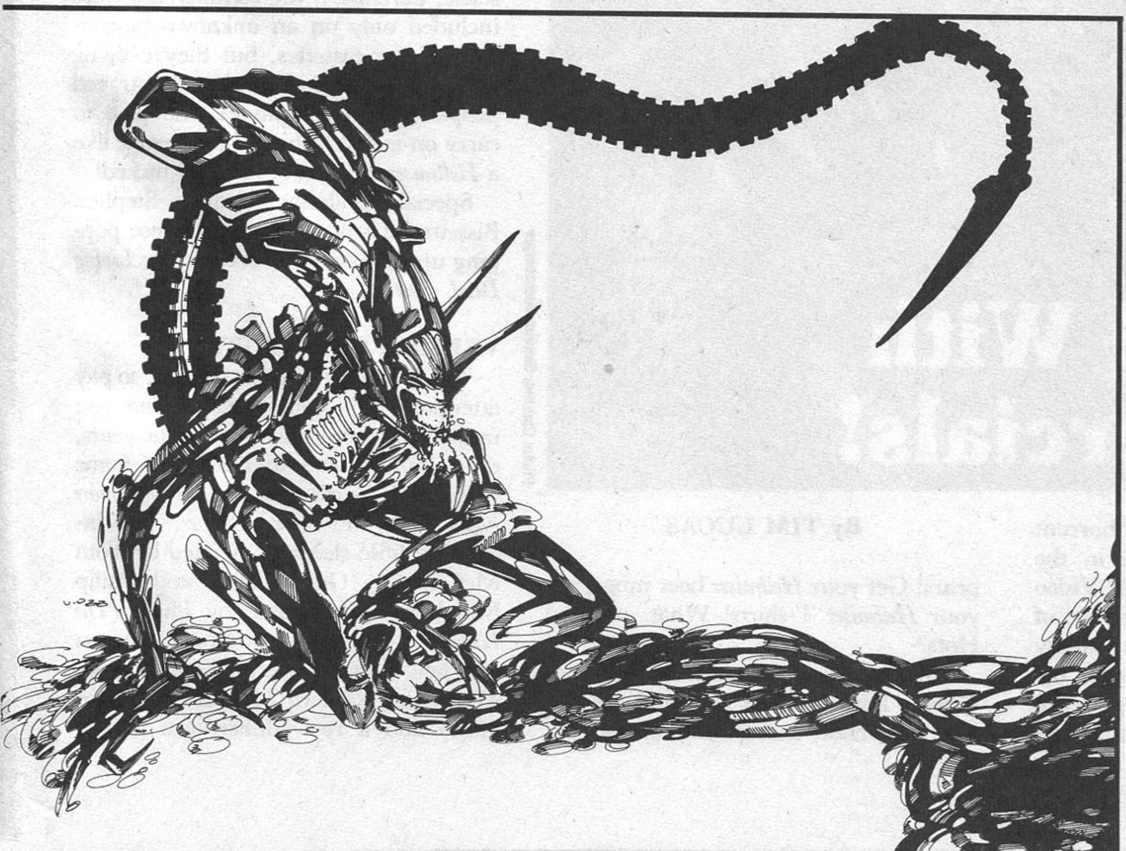
Metalhead Sounds Off!

. . . Your decision not to include heavy metal music is wrong. That type of music and horror are intrinsically linked together. Witness a few recent songs by Dokken ("Dream Warriors" for the third Freddy movie), W.A.S.P. ("Scream Until You Like It" for *Ghoulies 2*) and Guns N' Roses ("Sweet Child O' Mine" for the movie *Bad Dreams*). Apparently, somebody out there in filmland knows which music fits which genre, and heavy metal music fits horror movies like a leather glove.

Joseph Olszewski Jr.
2802 Shelley Road
Philadelphia, PA 19152

Hey, nobody said we'll ignore music personalities who do work in the horror field. (For instance, check out the interview with Joey Belladonna of Anthrax on page 48, not to mention our Ozzy poster.) But we're not a music magazine, and we're not going to do what other magazines do better. By the way, if you think heavy metal is the only music that fits the horror genre, you might try listening to the Cramps.

Remember, address your letters and cartoons to GOREZONE Gut Reactions, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. Include a SASE if you want something returned. Include a request for some famous person's phone number or address if you want us to laugh and throw out your letter. Sorry, absolutely no *personal replies.*


Art: Alex Anguzza

TO REMOVE THE POSTERS:
Open the magazine to the center and unbend the staples; pry them up with a screwdriver to avoid punctured, bleeding fingers. After opening all three staples, pull the posters out carefully, then bend the staples back to their original position in order to keep the rest of this wonderful magazine in good working order.

Video WATCHDOG

Let's party! Goodtimes comes up with unseen footage from *Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster*.

Everybody in the pool for Goodtimes' inflation-busting $9.95 price on *Creature from the Black Lagoon*.

Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

To Hell With Commercials!

By TIM LUCAS

In one of the most abhorrent developments yet witnessed in the realm of home video, New World Video has seen fit to rape their video releases of Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* in a particularly shocking way. Suddenly, between the last scene and the end credits, a gol-darn *commercial* for *Hellraiser* merchandise appears! Get your *Hellraiser* beer mugs, get your *Hellraiser* T-shirts! What, no Red Hots?

Hey, guys, this is *Clive* Barker, not *Carnival* Barker. Don't you think his picture has made enough money for you without necessitating this kind of mercenary, mood-shattering monkey business? For some reason (common sense, perhaps?), the commercials were included only on an unknown percentage of the cassettes, but they're being rented by a growing number of outraged people! Video companies who plan to carry on in this fashion should make like a *Hellraiser* T-shirt. . . and get tucked!

Special Bulletin: Amigo Stephen Bissette reports the same nonsense popping up in cassettes of *Return of the Living Dead, Part II*!

VERSION TERRITORY

The following tale gets tangled, so pay attention. The completists among you may have become aware, over the years, of a movie that's appeared on home video under such titles as *The Nightmare Never Ends* and *Satan's Supper*. This intriguing little sleeper—directed by Tom McGowran, Greg Tallas and Philip Marshak, and scripted by Philip (*The Unholy*) Yordan—features Cameron Mitchell as the proverbial cop, Charles Moll (later Richard Moll of *Night Court* fame) and a real stinker of a performance by female lead Faith Clift. Despite a few memorable shocks, this 82-minute feature was never exactly coherent. In 1985, the problem worsened when the film was condensed into one of the three 30-minute horror shorts which composed Media Home Entertainment's *Night Train to Terror*.

The film has now finally surfaced under its original title, *Cataclysm*, on Genesis Video. At 92 minutes, this version runs 10-11 minutes longer than any previous edition and plays far more coherently, despite the fact that Clift appears in most of the added footage.

Photo: Ralph Nelson Jr./Copyright 1987 Universal City Studios

Even with the extra video footage, *Jaws: The Revenge* deserves to sink.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE GOODTIMES GONE?

Speaking of those VHS-only, LP-recorded, budget labels, Goodtimes Video is starting to look better and better. A few years ago, they were releasing ugly-looking copies of product presumed in the public domain, but things are changing. Goodtimes has licensed such titles as Jack Arnold's *It Came from Outer Space* and *Creature from the Black Lagoon* from MCA Video, as well as *King Kong vs. Godzilla* with letterboxed credits. Transfers, all taken from MCA's original 35mm negatives, are perfect and compromised only by the label's LP-speed cost-cutting tactics. At a suggested retail price of $9.95, how can you go wrong?

Goodtimes has a number of other interesting titles, including *Hercules Against the Moon Men*, Antonio Margheriti's *Battle of the Worlds* (the quality greatly improved for its recent rerelease) and a version of *Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster* that ends with an airport scene unavailable on any other tape version, never before seen on American theater screens!

Photo: Courtesy Stephen Jochsberger

WHEREFORE ART THOU, DARIO?

The New York video grapevine reports that Italian specialty stores in areas like Queens and Hoboken are already carrying videocassettes of Dario Argento's *Opera*! The tapes are in Italian, but according to a source close to the source (how's that for vague?), this doesn't necessarily mean the prints are more complete than the version Orion will get around to releasing in, oh, 1995. Word has it that the tapes are cut, but don't let me foil your natural curiosity.

RUSSO REDUX

The Watchdog was surprised to find, nestled between the announcements of a lot of prurient teenage fluff from Vestron Video, the announcement of Vestron's forthcoming release of *The Majorettes*! Based on one of John (*Midnight*) Russo's horror novels, the film is a grisly whodunit investigating the serial killings of a group of majorettes in smalltown America. It's also the directorial debut of none other than Bill Hinzman, the zombie in Romero/Russo's *Night of the Living Dead* who's "coming to get you, Barbara!" It's never been in wide release, is rated R, runs 93 minutes and sells for $69.95.

> **Goodtimes Video is starting to look better and better.**

If that's not enough Russo for your diet, delve into Gorezonian Tim Ferrante's highly entertaining *Drive-In Madness! The Video*, available from Imagine Inc. (PO Box 9674, Pittsburgh, PA 15226). Included in this grab bag documentary is footage from a conversation between John Russo and *NOTLD*'s Russell "Johnny" Streiner, who bemoans how he's been saddled with one of the most quotable lines in horror film history—and says it, with feeling, one last time, for the record. The tape is amusing in other ways, too, like Sam Sherman wistfully recollecting the premiere of *Satan's Sadists* in a town where Regina Carrol, the "Freak Out" girl, was treated like royalty! And, unlike the book on which it's based, *Drive-In Madness! The Video* IS available!

PETITE PERKS

MCA's recent, long-overdue release of Jack Arnold's *The Incredible Shrinking Man* has some interesting things going for it. Not only is it kindly priced at an incredibly reduced $29.95, but the opening credits are attractively shrunken to the letterbox format (to maintain wide-screen shape). The mist hasn't looked so

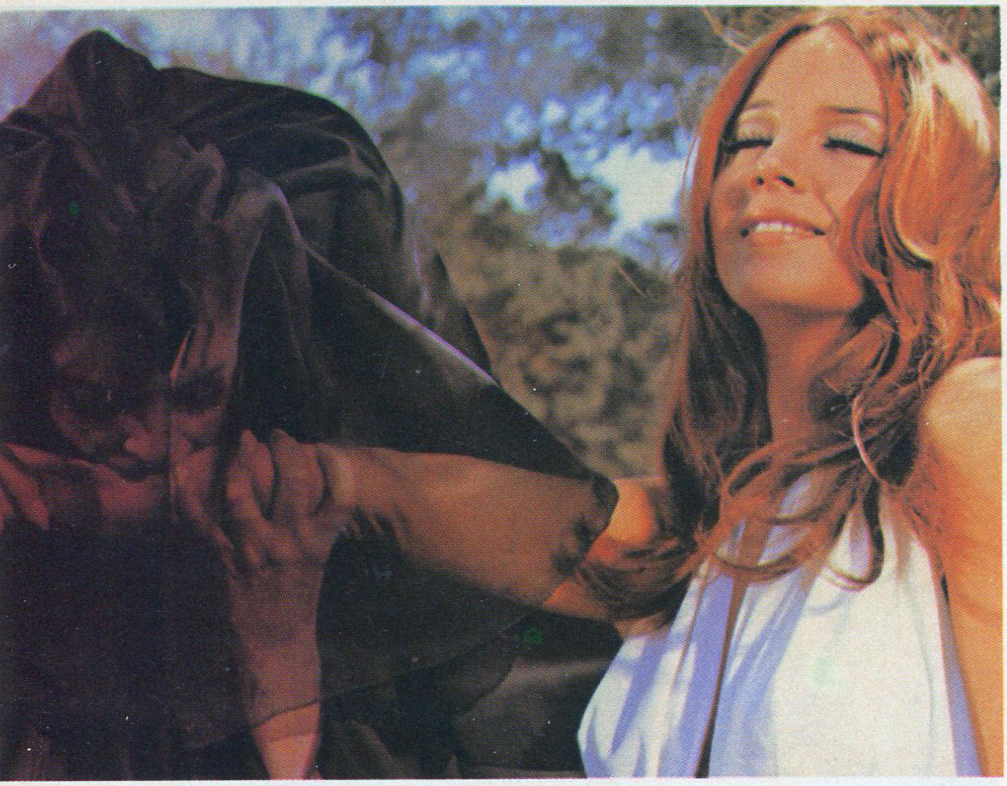


Photo: Courtesy Bill George

Ecstasy overtakes a *Werewolf vs. the Vampire Woman* starlet on learning of the Naschy movie's video arrival.

good since its original theatrical release! MCA has also thoughtfully filled out the program with trailers for *The Invisible Ray* and *Iceman* (also letterboxed).

> **B*ruce Lee Fights Back from the Grave* has nothing to do with Bruce Lee and absolutely no supernatural content.**

FREDA LESSON, NUMERO DUE

In last issue's column, I neglected to mention Wizard's *Fear*, which is actually Riccardo Freda's *L'Ossessione che Uccide* ("Murder Obsession," 1980). The great Riccardo's last feature to date, it's an astonishingly frank, unrated *giallo* thriller, with one of the most incredibly sick and chilling finales you'll ever see.

NASCHING OUR TEETH

Fans of Spanish horror star Paul Naschy might like to know that his famous and long-unseen *Walpurgis Night*, (a.k.a. *The Werewolf vs. the Vampire Woman*, 1970) has popped up on Air Video, under the title *Blood Moon* (not to be confused with Trans World's *Bloody Moon*, a Jess Franco item). Transfer quality is acceptable, if slightly greenish and grainy, and the film's original title manages to make it onscreen at the end.

Dedicated Naschians might also like to know about these other obscure releases: *Inquisition* (Naschy's directorial debut) is available on the Video City label, while All Seasons Entertainment has issued *The Rue Morgue Massacres* (actually *Hunchback of the Morgue*, one of Naschy's best), *The Devil's Possessed* (a boring historical drama with sadistic undertones), *Exorcism* (the worst demonic possession film ever made!) and the OK *Vengeance of the Zombies*. Media's *The Craving* is actually Naschy's *El Retorno del Hombre Lobo* ("Return of the Werewolf," 1980), featuring his best werewolf make-up ever, albeit in one of his slightest stories. Its nude and sacrificial scenes are also aggravatingly snipped to avoid a you-know-what. Naschy's only science-fiction film, *The People Who Own the Dark*, is now available from Star Classics, one of those VHS-only, LP-recorded budget labels.

WILLIAM CASTLE LIVES!

Have to give Key Video another round of applause (see last issue) for the best nostalgic chuckle I've had lately. The preview screening cassettes of Bigas Luna's *Anguish* sent by the company to industry insiders were packaged in special shrink-wrap bearing a bulging, bloodshot, gouged rubber eyeball! It's too early to tell whether Key will make the eyeballs available for the tape's public release, but it was a cute touch. Thought they'd like to know we noticed. Give that PR cat a raise!

Speaking of William Castle, last issue the Watchdog erroneously said that Patricia Cutts was the actress who stepped into color in *The Tingler*. That actress was in fact the late, great Judith Evelyn. Cutts essayed the role of Vincent Price's cold-hearted bride.

BANZAI, PER FAVORE

Italian completists, brace yourselves! The next time you're in your favorite video store, slow down as you pass the Martial Arts section and scout for Media's *Bruce Lee Fights Back from the Grave* (1978). Aside from its ludicrous cover—depicting the deceased star bursting from the ground below his headstone to wage war with a giant human-headed bat—it has a most interesting heritage.

First of all, it has nothing to do with Bruce Lee and, aside from a brief pre-credit reenactment of the box art, has absolutely no supernatural content! The print credits direction to Doo Yong Lee, but the box credits "Bert Lenzi." That's right, filmed entirely in Los Angeles with a Chinese and Italian cast, the movie is a meticulously counterfeited Martial Arts item, replete with faked scratches, zany zooms and deliriously dire dubbing, concocted by none other than Umberto (*Make Them Die Slowly*) Lenzi!

If that's not enough for you to build a video party around, here's the capper: The story's evil, cheroot-smoking villain is named *Marcus Welby*!

LASERDISCOGRAPHY

For you laserphiles, here's a countdown of recent laserdisc horror releases featuring stereo and surround sound capabilities: *Hellraiser*, *The Hitcher*, *Jaws: The Revenge* (with as-if-we-needed-more additional footage), *Night of the Creeps*, *Predator* and *RoboCop* (digital). Other new releases include *Blacula*, *Creepshow 2* (digital stereo) and a wonderful documentary, *The Fantasy World of George Pal*. Joe Dante's *Amazon Women on the Moon* and *The Wolf Man* have been issued with CAV single-frame access on Side 2, the latter including the original theatrical trailer for the Universal classic.

Forthcoming releases include *The Believers*, *The Curse*, *Demons* (in digital stereo—finally!), *Dolls*, *Flowers in the Attic*, *The Hidden*, *Innerspace* (letterboxed, like the video), the Philip K. Dick-influenced *Man Facing Southeast*, *The Monster Squad*, William Peter Blatty's *The Ninth Configuration*, *Rawhead Rex*, *The*

Rosary Murders, *Survivor* and *Transmutations* (a.k.a. *Underworld*).

Of course, the highlight of any laserdisc collector's hobby is the announcement of new titles from Criterion. This company, which specializes in making widescreen versions of critically-acclaimed features available, recently issued *Night of the Hunter*. Genre-related titles set for 1988 release include Antonioni's *Blowup*, *Fellini Satyricon*, *Forbidden Planet*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, *The Princess Bride* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. They'll all be letterboxed, equipped with CAV, in stereo and supplemented with original theatrical trailers.

R.I.P.

Occasionally, in my duties as the Video Watchdog, I must report untimely passings in the world of home video. It is now my sad duty to acknowledge the end of an era, the hiatus of a higher standard, the loss of a dear friend. I speak, of course, of Maxell's recent decision to halt manufacture of all blank Beta videocassettes.

Every seasoned videophile knows that Beta is a noticeably superior format to VHS. Thanks to a fatal marketing strategy even stupider than new Coke, Sony's original Beta-I tapes were built to hold only one hour of programming, and VHS quickly stepped in with the first cassettes capable of recording an entire motion picture. By the time Sony released its counterattack—the three-hour Beta-II format—VHS had already effectively taken over the market.

The people who love video enough to want the best are now beginning to suffer. Video stores are deleting their Beta titles, not ordering new ones, and cassette manufacturers are making decisions like this. Some video companies, like Warner, are trying to save the format by pricing new Beta releases $50.00 under VHS (Joe Dante's *Innerspace*, for example).

I was not alone in thinking Maxell's tape products—especially their infallible Maxell XG Gold—the best in the business. Using Maxell Gold was a sign of special respect for the film I'd chosen to record; there are some movies that are simply too good or too rare to entrust to other brands.

But now I, and the rest of you Betaphiles, are going to have to do exactly that. Thanks for the memories, Maxell, and if there's ever a resurgence of simple pride in craftsmanship in this loopy land of ours, the Watchdog hopes you'll reconsider. ✹

Photo: Courtesy Sam Sherman

Drive-In Madness! The Video **posits that** ***Dracula vs. Frankenstein*** **producer Sam Sherman was ahead of his time.**

AMERICAN GOTHIC

"...a thoroughly entertaining movie...one of the most creepily degenerate and subversive releases in quite some time."

By DOUG BROD

All good backwoods homes have visitors' galleries in the basements.

Yvonne De Carlo and Rod Steiger strike a classic pose in the delightfully perverse *American Gothic*.

All Photos: Courtesy Vidmark

On a recent installment of Fox TV's *The Late Show*, Yvonne De Carlo, former *Munsters* star and Russ Meyer actress (remember *The Seven Minutes*?), appeared to plug her new autobiography and current movie. After the usual succession of obviously prediscussed questions and anecdotal blatherings, unctuous host Ross Shafer finally got around to asking her about the new film, *American Gothic*. He wanted to know if the movie featured the extreme gore and bloodletting of most contemporary horror tales. She said no, the picture is much "classier" than that.

Having seen the film theatrically just days before, this reviewer was astounded by that comment. Make no mistake: *American Gothic* is a thoroughly entertaining movie, but it is also one of the most creepily degenerate (you know, *sick*) and

William Hootkins, Michael J. Pollard and Janet Wright redefine rural cretinism.

subversive releases in quite some time.

If De Carlo meant "classy" in a qualitative, though not necessarily judgmental sense, perhaps she is right. *American Gothic* does boast an impressive lineup of "real names," both behind and in front of the camera. Starring with De Carlo are one Academy Award winner and another nominee—Rod Steiger and Michael J. Pollard, respectively. For trivia buffs, Mark Lindsay Chapman, the actor who lost the role of John Lennon in a TV bio-pic because his name was too similar to that of the singer's killer, also appears. Orchestrating all this statuette-laden talent is John Hough, director of such genre pics as *The Legend of Hell House*, *The Incubus* and the upcoming *Howling IV: The Original Nightmare*. And if nothing else, this U.K./Canada co-production looks great.

This is the kind of movie you need a certain amount of patience for, because the opening 20 or so minutes of exposition play like dozens of other thrillers. Cynthia (Sarah Torgov) has just recovered from a nervous breakdown. Her husband Jeff (Mark Ericksen) decided that a camping trip to an island off the Washington coast with some friends would be just the ticket to get her mind off her past troubles. When their small plane malfunctions, they are forced to land on an unfamiliar island.

While exploring the woods in search of some assistance, the group comes across an old country-style house and its weird, anachronistic inhabitants. There's Ma and Pa, generous to a fault, who tsk-tsk the young folks' vivid stories of present-day space travel. The old-timers still live in a world of the Charleston and President Wilson.

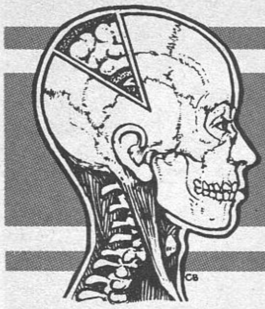
Once Cynthia and her friends meet the couple's motley trio of offspring, well, that's when *American Gothic* really starts to cook. Fanny, Woody and Teddy all look like they just stepped out of an absurd Carol Burnett skit. Fanny is a bloated, middle-aged woman who claims to be a 12-year-old, while her brothers are slobbering imbeciles, one whiny, the other angry and ursine. They have their own ways of playing "games" with their guests. . . and, of course, they've got one mighty secret down in the basement.

The movie that most closely resembles *American Gothic* is Charles Kaufman's *Mother's Day*, a somewhat gorier yet less subtlely depraved black comedy. It too features two goonish sons and their psychotic mother, but *American Gothic* overtly addresses such taboos as incest and necrophilia while serving up its share of shocks. In its own perverse way, the movie works as a commentary on the narrow-minded conservatism and hypocritical religiousness that prevails in this country today. This is the ultimate "family that stays together"; they live in a vacuum, a plastic bubble, that outsiders dare not disrupt. The clan has an insane, inbred continuity that they must protect. A radical departure for a genre currently better-known for its garroting of fornicating teenagers than for its attempts at social criticism, the movie ends on an appropriately cynical note, with the family broken, but with another loon waiting in the wings.

Rod Steiger has a field day as Pa, grumbling and bellowing like an Amish Archie Bunker, while Yvonne De Carlo utters her maternal bon mots with pure relish. As the gruesome threesome, Pollard, William Hootkins and Janet Wright are all staggering in their cretinous behavior. They had this reviewer convinced.

Demented but with a conscience—like the best social satire—*American Gothic* is a surprisingly potent picture. As for De Carlo's shocking talk-show rebuff—well, I don't know about "classy," but I know what I like.

And she acts like a 12-year-old? *Ugghhh*!



PIECE O'MIND

by Chas. Balun

Slasher Bashing

Joan Crawford goes after another fool who dared to use wire hangers in William Castle's *Strait-Jacket*.

It appears as though one of the perennial staples of the horror film, the seemingly lowly Slasher film, has come under some intense fire from fans and critics alike during the past few years. Variously referred to (most often in derisive terms) as Slice 'n' Dicers, Knife-killers, or Teenkill pics, this frequently flayed subgenre can't seem to buy a friend. From the High and Mighty (Siskel, Ebert, Ellison, et al) on down through the ranks of the snot-nosed, acidic-tongued editors of certain xeroxed, guttersniping fanzines, these poor pariahs of horrordom are getting their butts chewed from all sides.

But wait, hey, here's somebody who'll risk the scorn, the potential career damage and peer group pressure to speak out on behalf of these splatter scalliwags. Can you imagine? Yes, it's Chas. Balun for the defense. Don't misunderstand me; this is by no means a pronouncement in favor of any and all filmic portrayals of shuffling, rattle-breathed, mute psycho-killers bent on annihilating babysitters, sororities or slumber partiers. Not quite that simple. I'll never be on the side of any cynical, empty-headed, by-the-numbers films directed by opportunistic, ham-fisted workaholics who are just using the genre to further their own dubious careers in filmmaking. No way. The trouble with the Slasher subgenre lies not so much with the simplistic conventions of this type of film, but rather with the greedy people who've mistakenly assumed these pictures were a cinch to do—cheap, quick and dirty, allowing for maximum profit participation.

If an artist paints a truly execrable still life, are we to listen when he cries that the fault lies with the bowl of apples? That the subject matter was banal, overused, lacking depth or spatial relationships? No one ever derided Vermeer, Leonardo, Van Gogh or Monet because they "just" painted ordinary people, commonplace objects, or boring fruit and flowers. In a master's hand, the simple becomes the sublime. William Blake, English poet and artist, said it best:

> "To see a world in a grain of sand . . .
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
> and Eternity in an hour."

The subject can be of utmost simplicity, the canvas small and the pallete limited, but a gifted artist has a way of helping us see things in an entirely new and fresh manner, showing us the extraordinary among the ordinary. Horror fans and critics are perhaps justified somewhat in their mudslinging because actually witnessing a Slasher film done with any finesse, daring or originality has become a rare event, indeed. But, similarly, could you dismiss the archaic and fixed framework of the love story, the war story or the detective thriller, simply because no one's made a really good one recently? Let's face it, the boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl and boy-wins/loses-girl scenario has been around since sperm cells have had tails. And who amongst us complains when bombs are dropped, planes shot down and soldiers killed during a war story? Old hat? Seen it before? Boring? Y-A-W-N?

When a Stalk 'n' Snuff film is handled with a high degree of skill, craftsmanship, and ingenuity, you know what? You forget what it is and just settle back to be knocked out by a damn good little movie. Accomplished filmmaking transcends genre. *Frankenstein* isn't "just" a Mad Doctor exercise any more than *Apocalypse Now* is "just" a War flick. Unfortunately, today's new breed of lazy fan is content to think that John Carpenter, Sean Cunningham and Tom Savini invented the gory body count pictures they seem so tired of now. It's a pity, too, because the vulgar, roguish and simple-minded Slasher outing has shown incredible flashes of brilliance in the past 30 years. Even when some of the earlier precursors to today's Knifekill films weren't exactly brilliant, riveting or remarkable, most were well-crafted, serious works whose modest goals seemed to have been successfully achieved.

But, alas, contemporary audiences remain ignorant of the past. History is a drag, a bore. Listen, folks: "He who doesn't learn from the past is condemned to repeat it." Many of today's current crop of genre filmmakers are obviously and painfully unaware that Mario Bava, Michael Powell, William Castle and Dario Argento had already achieved notable triumphs with a formula most people credit to Carpenter's *Halloween* or Cunningham's *Friday the 13th*.

Check out Bava's *Blood and Black Lace* (1964), *Hatchet for a Honeymoon* (1969) or better yet *Bay of Blood* (a.k.a. *Twitch of the Death Nerve*, 1971) for previews of most, if not all, of the outlandish and gory murders later showcased in *Friday the 13th* and the whole plethora of anemic imitators who followed suit. Dario Argento's films, from *Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) and *Four Flies on Gray Velvet* (1971) on through *Tenebrae* (1982)

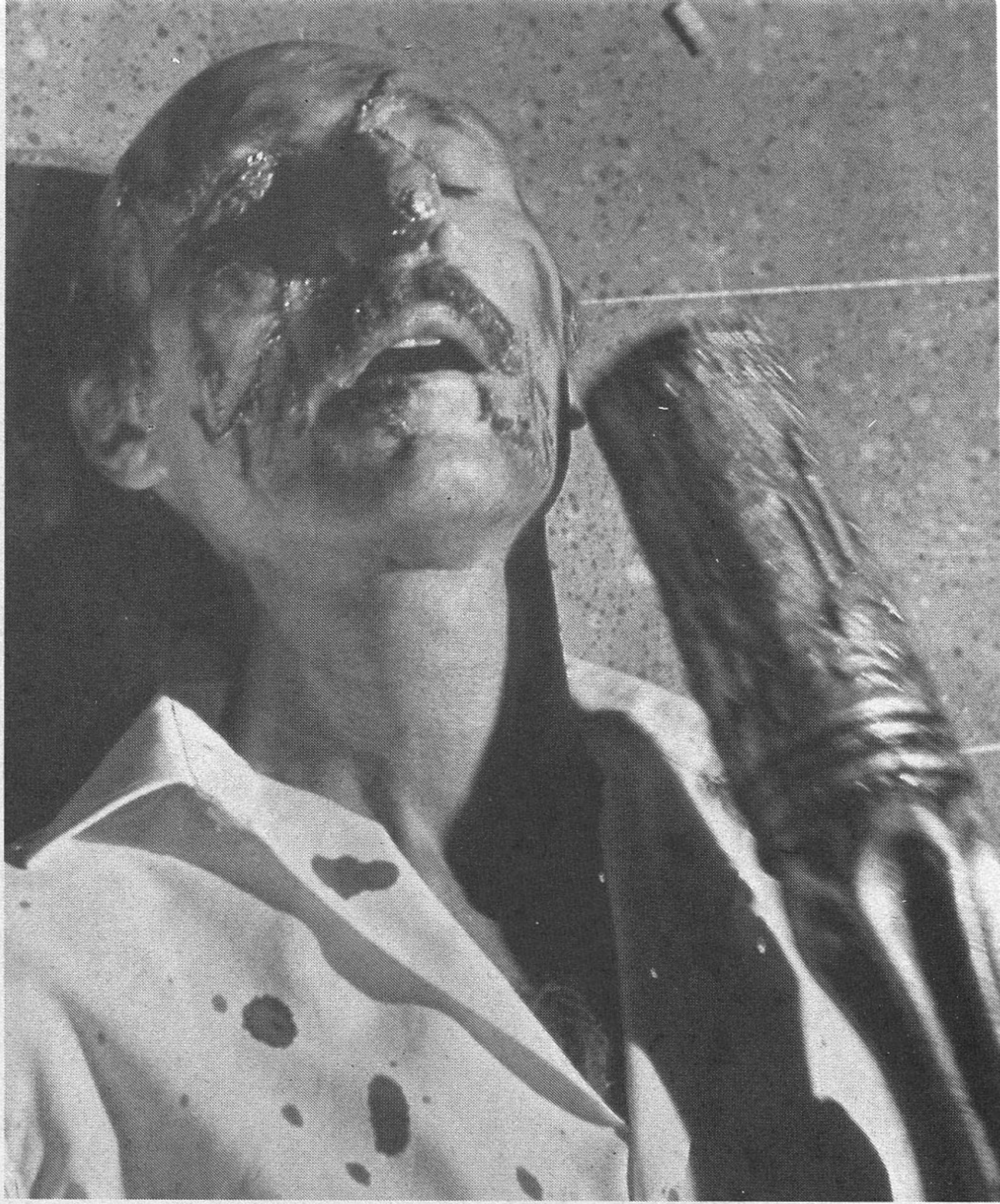
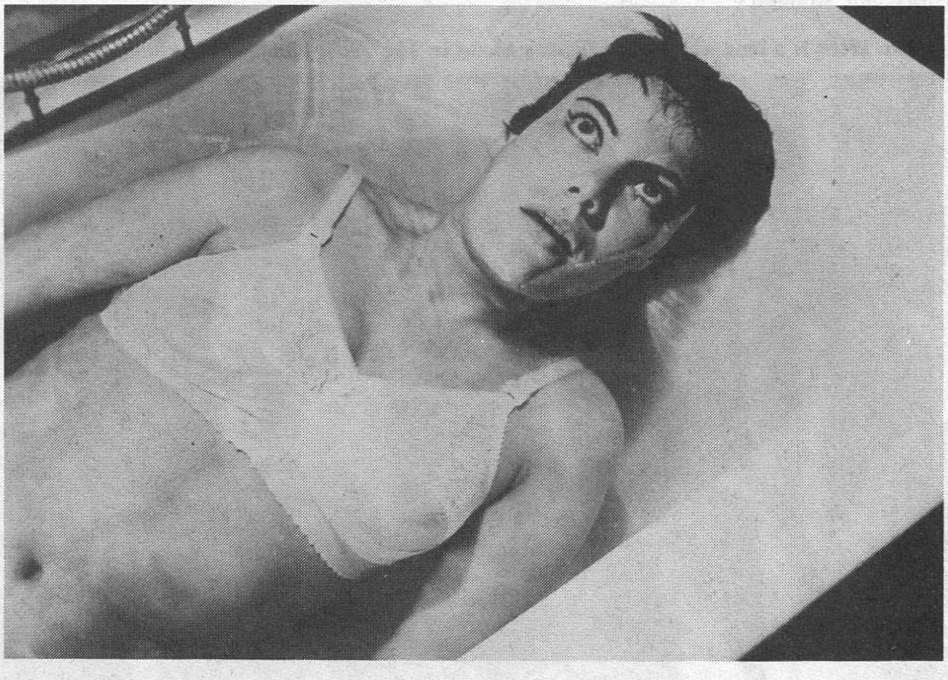


Photo: Courtesy Bill George

John Carpenter credits *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* and other Dario Argento hits for inspiring *Halloween*.

Photo: Courtesy Bill George



Mario Bava gave new meaning to the word bloodbath with *Blood and Black Lace* and other slasher shockers.

Photo: Courtesy Bill George

Perhaps *Alice, Sweet Alice* would get the recognition it deserves if the filmmakers got their title straight.

Dawn Wells is a long way from *Gilligan's Island* in *The Town That Dreaded Sundown.*

Photo: Courtesy Bill George

and the recent *Opera* (1987), have celebrated the trials and tribulations of the gloved serial killer and have elevated the Knifekill film to High Art.

Besides Argento and Bava's films of the '60s, a host of others were successfully manipulating audiences and critics alike with efforts that would fall comfortably within the definition of the Slasher credo. Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) was followed by several William Castle films, including *Strait-Jacket* (1964), written by Robert Bloch, *I Saw What You Did* (1965) and *Homicidal* (1961), which *Time* magazine said "surpasses *Psycho* in structure, suspense, and sheer nervous drive. Those who cannot bear the tension may be grateful for the 'Fright Break' during which they may 'follow the yellow streak to the coward's corner and have the admission sneerfully refunded.' "

Michael Powell's disturbing, twisted *Peeping Tom* (1960) still stands as one of the most frighteningly perverse studies in psychopathology ever attempted in a Slasher film. It's a sick, unsettling film, though its cruel power is undeniable. Francis Ford Coppola's *Dementia 13* (1963), a Roger Corman-produced quickie, showed cheaply and effectively that ax murders could succeed both at the box office and on the art house circuit.

Blake (*Pink Panther*) Edwards' *Experiment in Terror* (1962) is a chilling film noir-style thriller that established brooding, asthmatic psychopaths as a new kind of antihero. Though the film unwisely attempts a big, slam-bang climax (at a baseball stadium), the preceding 90 minutes provide a crackerjack example of toying with the audience's fear of being found and murdered, right there in their own homes. Audrey Hepburn harbored a similar phobia in *Wait Until Dark* (1967), a tense, relentless shocker boasting one of the best chair-jumping scenes in all of slasherdom. You haven't forgotten *that* one, now, have you?

Ten years later, audiences who praised the much overrated *When a Stranger Calls* (1979) for its use of the killer-in-the-home scenario had obviously never seen the far superior *Black Christmas* (1974). Bob (*Porky's*) Clark's neat little thriller also featured several other ingredients soon to be *de rigeur* in the '80s, such as a maniac who preys on sexually active women, subjective camera sequences from the killer's point-of-view, and a double-twist shock ending. Recently, the blockbuster success of *Fatal Attraction* (1987) once again proved that audiences were quick to forget the similarly-themed and far superior *Play Misty for Me* (1971) and the

Ever since *Psycho*, you can't keep them maniacs out of the shower. Michele Soavi's recent *Stagefright* carries on the tradition.

Unfortunately, today's lazy fan is content to think that Carpenter, Cunningham and Savini invented the gory body count pictures.

Photo: Copyright 1987 Paramount

Photo: Courtesy Imperial Entertainment

The blockbuster success of *Fatal Attraction* once again proved that audiences were quick to forget the similarly-themed and far superior *Play Misty for Me*.

***Fatal Attraction*'s Glenn Close won't mention *Play Misty For Me* in front of Michael Douglas again.**

Canadian-produced film also called *Fatal Attraction*, shot a couple of years earlier and starring Sally Kellerman and Stephen (*Scanners*) Lack. (The filmmakers forgot to apply for a U.S. copyright on the title.)

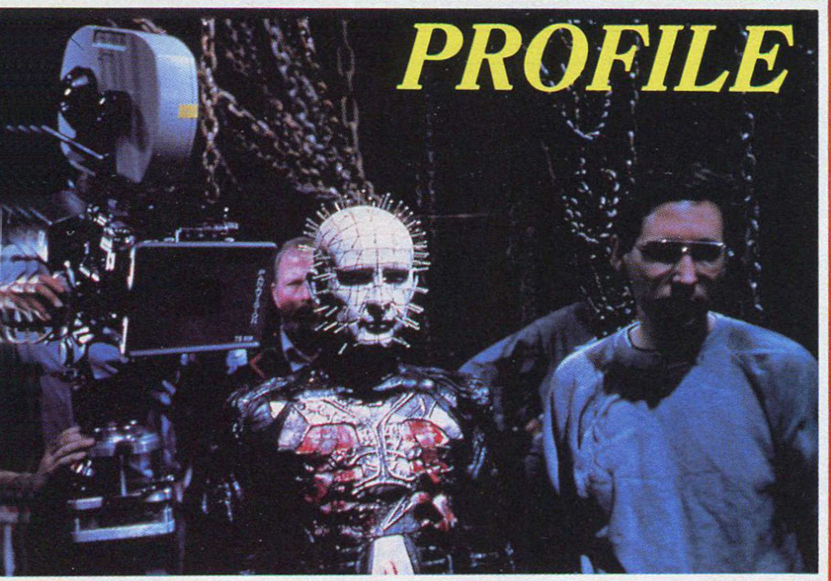
In 1977, a hooded, heavy-breathing psycho got the jump on both Jason and the Shape by slaughtering teens in an inventive manner (hunting knife affixed to trombone—victim serenaded to death) in Charles B. Pierce's *The Town That Dreaded Sundown*. Yep, even the Teenkill pic showed some serious promise when Renee Daalder's *Massacre at Central High* (1977) presented a non-formulaic, complex morality play in lieu of the silent killer, while Alfred Sole's *Alice, Sweet Alice* (a.k.a. *Communion*, a.k.a. *Holy Terror*, 1976) uses Catholic guilt, sexual paranoia, grotesque imagery, teenagers *and* the knife to cut a path to both your gut and your brain. Most recently, though, it's been Joseph Ruben's superlative *The Stepfather* (1987) which has demonstrated once again that there's still a sparkle in an old Slasher's eye.

People who have persistently criticized this out-of-favor subgenre must make at least some attempt to differentiate between Trash Slash (*Sorority House Massacre*, *Graduation Day*, *Madman*, etc.) and Class Slash (*Night Warning*, *Tenebrae*, etc.). Otherwise, their mouths are writing checks their brains can't cash.

Photo: Courtesy Maitland McDonagh

If American copycats could figure out what Argento's titles like *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* meant, they would have stolen them too.

PROFILE

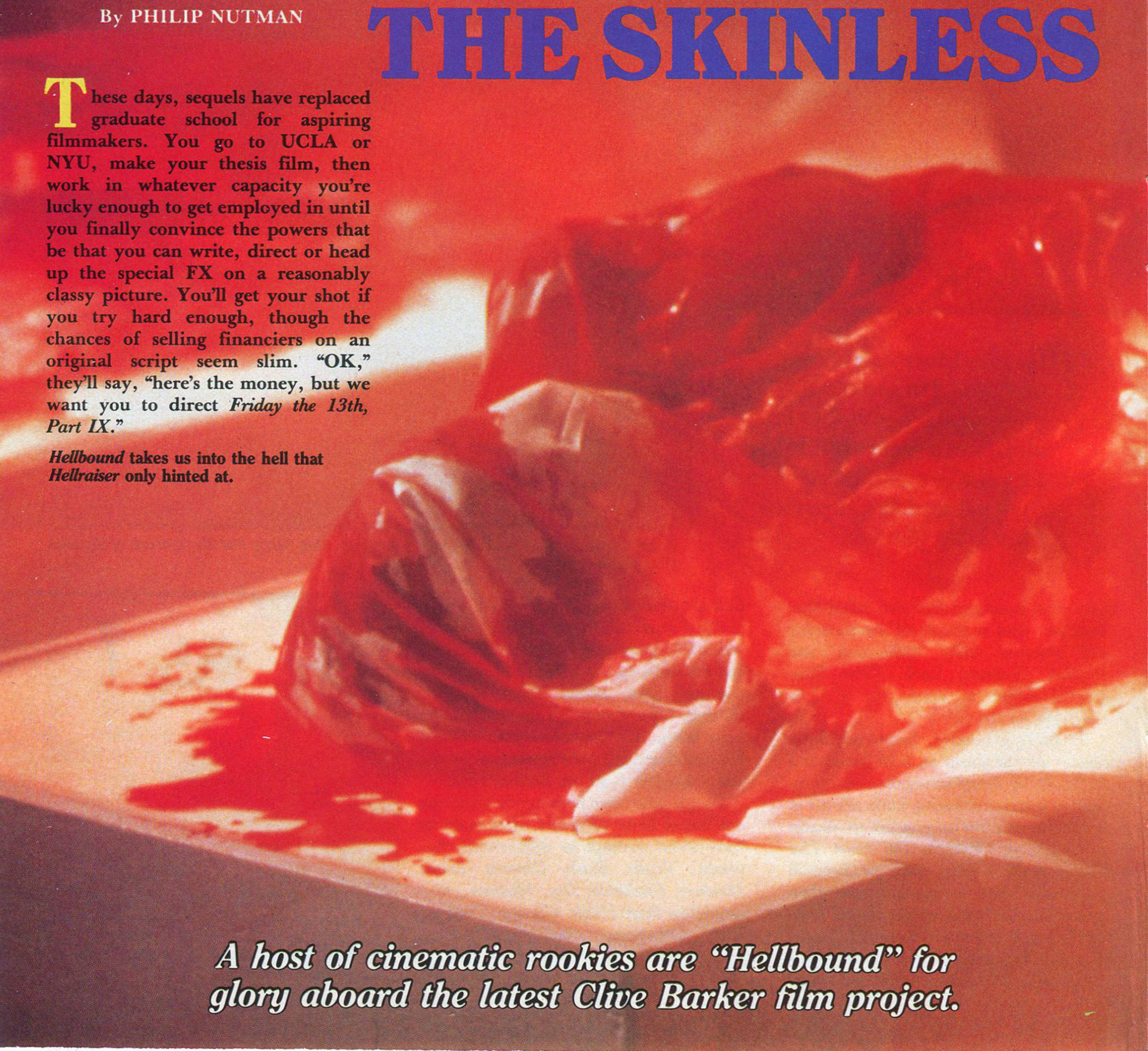


Tony Randel (right) makes his directorial debut in the impressive *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*, which opens this month.

THE YOUNG AND THE SKINLESS

By PHILIP NUTMAN

These days, sequels have replaced graduate school for aspiring filmmakers. You go to UCLA or NYU, make your thesis film, then work in whatever capacity you're lucky enough to get employed in until you finally convince the powers that be that you can write, direct or head up the special FX on a reasonably classy picture. You'll get your shot if you try hard enough, though the chances of selling financiers on an original script seem slim. "OK," they'll say, "here's the money, but we want you to direct *Friday the 13th, Part IX*."



Hellbound **takes us into the hell that** ***Hellraiser*** **only hinted at.**

A host of cinematic rookies are "Hellbound" for glory aboard the latest Clive Barker film project.

Then again, you might just be in the right place at the right time and get hired to pen a screenplay even though you've never written one before. Like Peter Atkins, screenwriter of *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*.

"As with most things in life, it comes down to who you know rather than what you know," the jovial Liverpudlian concedes. In this case, the person he knew was Clive Barker.

"Basically, the reason why Clive didn't script *Hellbound* was that he didn't have the time, due to previous publishing commitments," Atkins explains. "We're old friends, and he'd read unpublished fiction of mine, so he thought I could do the job, arranged a meeting with [producer] Chris Figg, and I blabbed my way in from there. Everyone has liked what I've done, which is why I've managed to survive four drafts rather than just doing the first."

Barker and Atkins met in 1974. "He'd just finished university, and I was straight out of school," the screenwriter recalls. "We were introduced by a mutual friend who thought we were both weird and would have something in common. At that time, Clive was running a theater company in Liverpool and I signed up as an actor, which led to our working together for about six years."

The theater outfit in question was eventually renamed the Dog Company and staged productions of Barker's plays *Colossus*, *The History of the Devil* and *Frankenstein in Love*. The troupe relocated from Barker and Atkins' home turf to London in 1977. After dividing his time between acting and music, Atkins finally opted to pursue the latter. "I left the theater company in 1981 and went back to Liverpool to form a band with an old school friend," he recounts. "We played pubs and clubs for a while, then I turned 30 and realized it was too late, that I'd have to try something else."

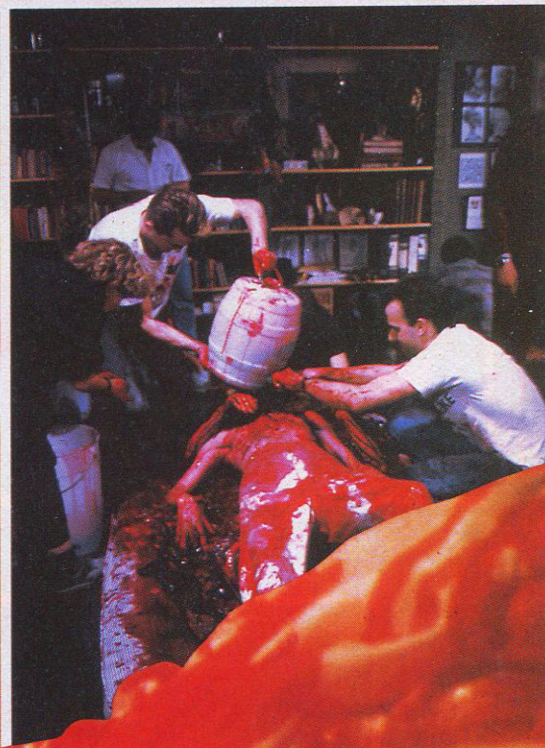
That something else was writing. "I sat down one day and just decided it was time to give it a try," he reveals. "I began scribbling some very short horror stories. Clive was the only person in the field I knew, so I sent them to him. He was very generous in his praise and encouraged me to write longer pieces." These turned out to be a series of novellas, the first of which may see publication next year. "Anyway, it was after I finished the first one that Clive decided I was ready to work on something else and brought me in on *Hellbound*."

Julia slips into a more comfortable skin.

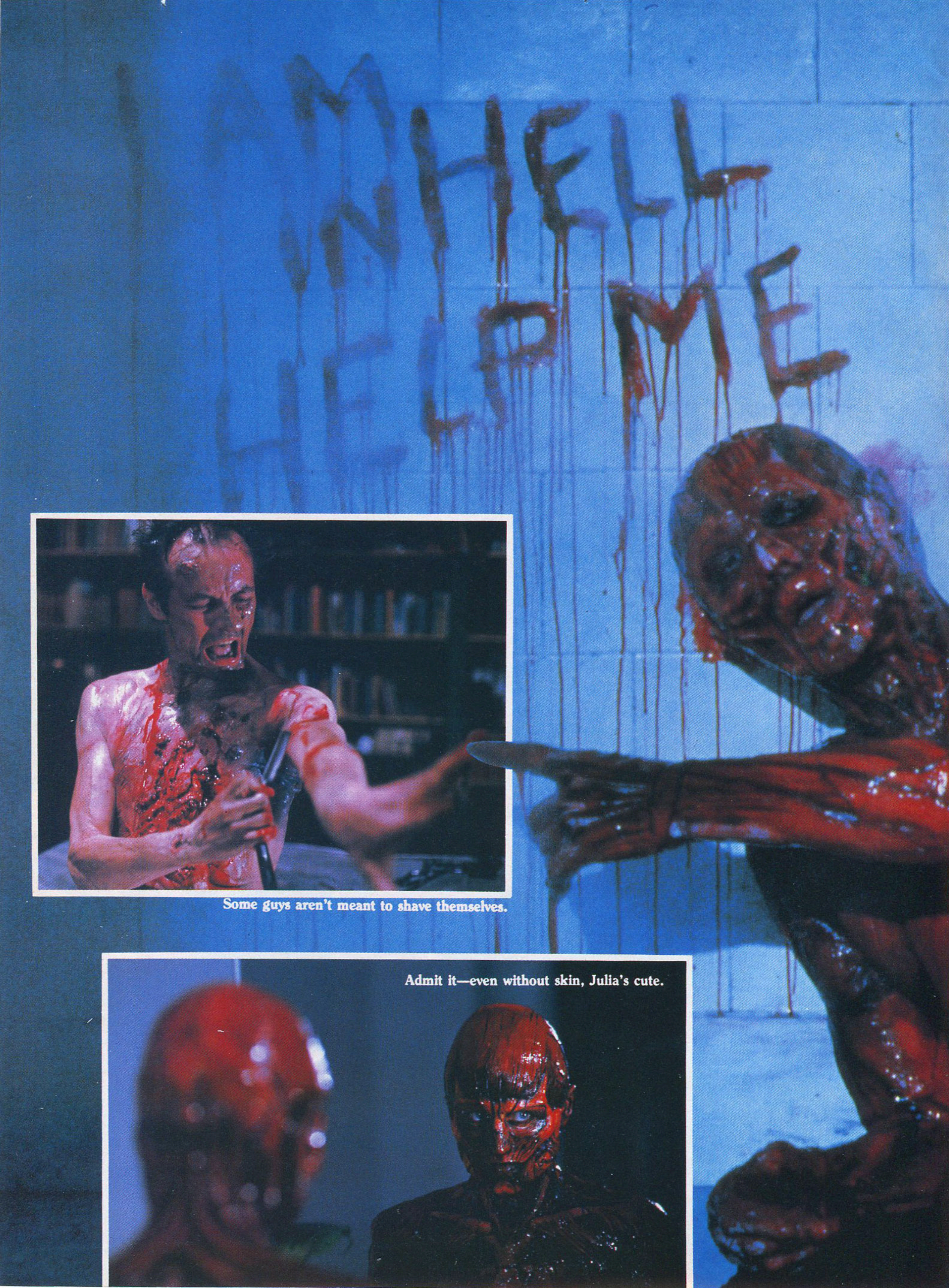
Screenwriting was an area Atkins wanted to explore, but the sudden opportunity to write *Hellbound* came much quicker than he ever expected. "It was a field I always had an ambition to move into and assumed the way to do it was to first get published," he admits over drinks at a Pinewood Studios bar during the *Hellraiser* sequel's shooting. "But here I am watching them translate my words into images. It's a wonderful experience."

Barker wrote a treatment for *Hellbound*, which gave Atkins his starting point. The story evolves directly from *Hellraiser* and develops certain aspects of the original picture.

Screenwriting involves an ongoing process of refinement and restructuring. Regardless of Barker's carefully composed treatment, the story grew considerably throughout the various scripting stages. "The major changes came between the first and second



There, see? They don't use blood by the bucketful on Clive Barker movies. They use *barrelfuls*.


I AM IN HELL
HELP ME

Some guys aren't meant to shave themselves.

Admit it—even without skin, Julia's cute.

drafts," informs Atkins, "which is the stage [director] Tony Randel got involved. He and I worked very closely on the second draft. I was in his company most of the time. Tony put in some nice ideas and was very helpful in maintaining a strong dramatic structure. We wrote some additions to the first draft, some action sequences and a second climax we came up with after lengthy discussions. The third and fourth drafts basically required dialogue polishes to respond to the actors we had, minor structural adjustments, with one major change: In the first two drafts, we had Larry Cotton, but then we found Andy Robinson couldn't do the film, so we had to rethink certain elements."

One thing Barker always wanted the sequel to examine was the Cenobites' background. "The surprises that come from the Cenobites in *Hellbound* were Clive's idea, though the back story that's going to be on screen came about during the second draft through working with Tony. Film is a collaborative art. I can't honestly remember who exactly came up with what—not that it's important; the main thing is delighting the audience."

Peter Atkins appears to have struck lucky. By the time *Hellbound* is released, he will have finished the first draft of *Hell on Earth*, the proposed third (and final) chapter in the *Hellraiser* saga, and by the year's end, he's scheduled to start on a script of *Cabal*, Barker's new short novel. "Whether or not *Hell on Earth* reaches the screen is dependent on how well *Hellbound* does at the box office," he ventures with understandable caution. "At this stage, it's pointless to speculate, but who knows?" Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain: Atkins will be very busy over the next year.

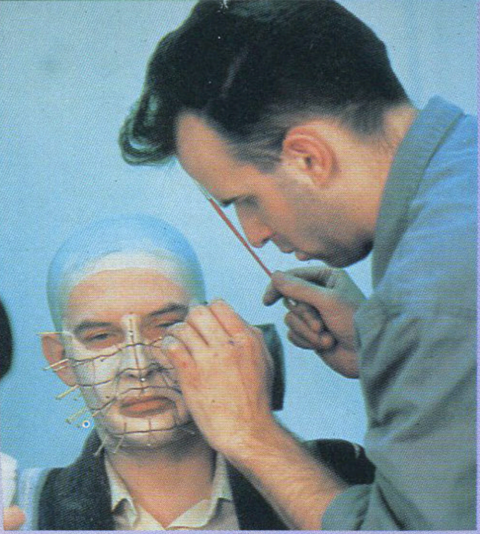
For director Tony Randel, however, *Hellbound* is a graduate project. If Atkins is the freshman on *Hellraiser II*, Randel is the experienced student who has paid his dues and has now been given his shot as the ship's creative captain. "I was confident with the idea of a picture that involved heavy special effects because of my background," he maintains.

That's quite a statement from someone who started out training to be an accountant. Born in Los Angeles in 1956, Randel not surprisingly grew up with a passion for cinema. When he discovered how much he hated his accounting studies, he switched to film. Upon leaving college, he worked in the mailroom at New World during the old regime with founder Roger Corman still in charge. Under Corman's guidance, Randel soon moved into the FX editing department to toil on *Battle Beyond the Stars*, an experience that taught him the basics of optical FX. Stints on *Forbidden World*, *Galaxy of Terror* and *Android* followed. From there, Corman moved him to trailers, where he worked on 15 campaigns over an 18-month period. Consequently pleased with Randel, Corman offered him a job as head of postproduction at Millenium, his new company, a position Randel held for months before rejoining New World.

"I had two goals when I left school," explains Randel. "One was to edit a feature film within five years, which I did." This was *Space Raiders*, a cheapie flick incorporating footage from other films he'd worked on. "The second was to direct a feature within 10 years. Those were the only broad goals I had, though I sort of abandoned the idea of directing when I became an executive."

After rejoining New World, Randel continued to supervise postproduction, eventually becoming responsible for all areas of development on certain projects. One of these was *Hellraiser*, on which he was appointed studio representative. "It was an interesting experience to have control over a picture from start to finish," he admits. "I learned you really don't have any control over what appears in the frame. After a couple of years, I got tired of developing one project, producing another and supervising post on a third. I felt I could better consolidate my energies if I just concentrated on one thing. I decided to direct."

Both Clive Barker and producer Christopher Figg felt comfortable enough with Randel's response to the material to give him the chance to tackle the sequel. "I liked the first picture very much, admired the creativity involved and felt it was something I had an affinity for, could do a good job with," opines Randel. "With the sequel, it's a question of, 'Here's a blank canvas, now create a



Doug Bradley undergoes Cenobitization at the hands of Geoff Portass.

new world.' I like that idea. To me, that's the real challenge of filmmaking. A film doesn't have to emulate reality, since film creates its own reality, and I want to explore that. Possibly, it's a reflection of my interest in science fiction, which is all about speculation concerning realities."

Having worked as an editor and a production executive is all well and good; so too is knowing your film theory. But it's a different matter once you hit the studio floor. "I've learned a hell of a lot over the past eight weeks," Randel admits in his Pinewood Studios office. "Things I thought would not be a problem were bigger problems, and those I thought would be problematic weren't. Simple things you learn in film school are much more complicated when you actually have to deal with them on set in physical terms.

"Otherwise, the one thing I've found more enjoyable than I thought was working with actors," Randel continues. "One of the golden pieces of advice Roger Corman gave me was to take acting lessons. I signed up with a coach so I could learn what an actor has to do to prepare, the best ways of communicating through the body. It was an invaluable experience."

As far as *Hellbound* is concerned, Barker and Figg remain adamant that the sequel reflects a different vision of the source material due to Randel's interest in science fiction. "Although it's essentially a world created by Clive, the sequel has a different style and another viewpoint to it," Randel evaluates. "The film is still about desires out of control, but it's my twist. One thing I'm fascinated by is human obsessions. Each person in this picture is obsessed with something, and I've brought a good examination of several sides of that to the story. It's a question of wanting to know things you really shouldn't. Humans still want to know, even if it hurts them."

Hellbound is also the graduation picture for special makeup FX designer Geoff Portass, Bob Keen's partner in Image Animations, the company that provided *Hellraiser*'s transformations and bloodletting. Portass entered the field on *Lifeforce* as a crew member when Keen was right-hand man to Nick Maley, who has now retired from the business. Following Tobe Hooper's SF horror flick, Portass progressed to *Highlander* with Maley and Keen as the latter's assistant. Maley left the production halfway through shooting. Following *Highlander*, Keen and Portass set up Image Animations. At first, work came slowly. "Just commercials and odd effects for rock videos," Portass recalls.

Then came a call from Clive Barker. "*Hellraiser* arrived at just the right time," Portass smiles. "Once it was over, we were swamped with offers from producers wanting blood and guts, which was not what we especially wanted to do. Gore's so easy, there's no challenge. Fortunately, we've now got other projects in development that don't involve blood. It's nice to sculpt something and see it up on screen without covering it in blood or slime. Characterization is the type of challenge I find most stimulating, like the Cenobites."

"Although it's a world essentially created by Clive Barker, *Hellbound* has a different style and another viewpoint to it."
—director Tony Randel

Since Bob Keen spent most of the last year in the United States handling the FX on *Waxwork* and reshooting the ending of *The Unholy*, Portass was given top billing on *Hellbound*, conceptualizing and designing new scenes of demonic depravity. "The new material is mainly the Channard Cenobite, who starts off as a normal man," he explains. "I designed him in the style of the original Cenobites, using the basic concepts as guidelines, only this time we didn't have to go to the first picture's extremes."

Portass and assistants spent five days sketching, bouncing around any ideas they had within the constraints of the character. "Actually, the design is quite simple," Portass grins. "Channard resembles an average household egg slicer. He has six wires wrapped tightly around his head, welded into the back of the skull, which is why he looks blue.

"Other than that," he adds, "we've got a lot more corpses on this picture, a small creature that comes out of the Lament Configuration, and the large tentacle in hell that carries Channard around."

A mobile Cenobite? "Yeah, sort of," Portass explains. "Channard wants to be one of them and is quite happy when he returns in his new form, but he is weakened by the whole process and needs help moving. The tentacle has eight fingers at its end and a bone saw that cuts into the top of Channard's head. Then one section of the tentacle emerges from his hand, which is the major new area we explore in this film. We've included stop-motion effects as part of the character. The tentacle sprouts little green things with lethal mouths on the end that whisk around, seemingly of their own volition. The mouths contain blades, eyes and teeth.

"The other stop-motion we've got is Leviathan, the lord of hell's labyrinth, which is the 'mother' of the Lament Configuration," he continues. "On the first film, we took on-set mechanical transformations as far as we could within budgetary limitations. It's very difficult to do something with a three-inch square cube. In *Hellbound*, we change the box into a large white diamond through remote control in one sequence, but we opted for stop-motion to give us more leeway in others. We enlarged the box's size to give us a cube that's fully detailed, and during the change it turns into a six-

No truth to the rumor that Butterball (Simon Bamford) is actually Tor Johnson after selling his soul to the devil.

Photos: Murray Close/Copyright 1988 New World

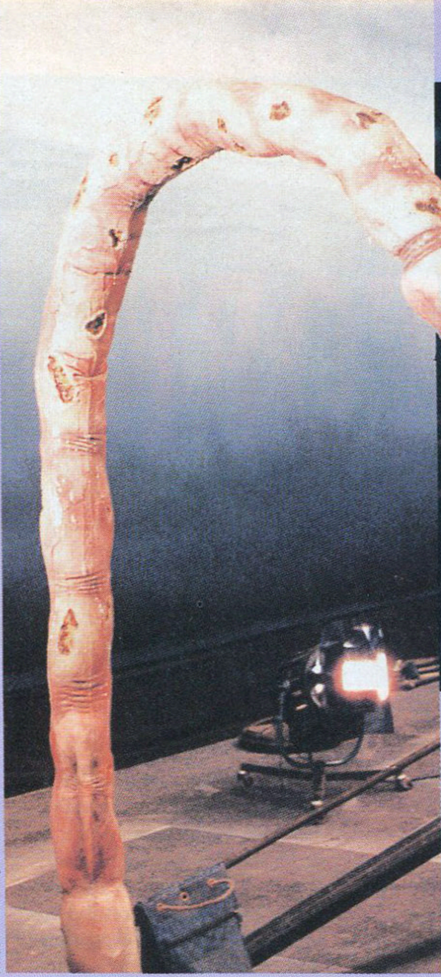


Photo: Courtesy Geoff Portass

The tentacle from hell, sculpted by Roger Walker and painted by Paul Jones, looks adequately gooey.

Let's hope some of this bloodshed remains in the film after the MPAA butchers get through with it.

sided white diamond four feet high."

The person responsible for the stop-motion is Rory Fellowes, a recent addition to the Image Animations crew. Portass has nothing but praise for Fellowes' work. "It's all gone very smoothly," Portass asserts on set as he turns actor Doug Bradley into Pinhead. "Rory's work was just what we needed to give the tentacle a lifelike movement we couldn't have achieved mechanically. I'm not opposed to animatronics, I personally prefer working with prosthetics, but if you need to use them, fine. In this case, stop-motion was preferable."

With so great a variety of FX in the sequel, Portass and his crew were up to their ears in work. "We've employed the biggest crew we've had to date," he states tiredly, having been up for countless hours. "Even with 31 people, there were inevitable logistical problems."

"We had nine weeks to prepare everything," adds assistant Roy Pudefoot, "We couldn't work on other effects while shooting was going on, because most of the effects were required during the first three weeks of filming."

"That locked us into the position of needing everything ready for the first day of principal photography," sighs Portass. "The way the schedule was arranged, those weeks featured the skinless Julia, since Clare Higgins was only available for a limited period of time due to another film commitment.

"The prosthetics are more detailed this time around," he continues proudly. "It's one step further than the skinned Frank in *Hellraiser*. We learned a lot doing that one. Also, we had a bit more time, though not much. Little John and Beverly Pond-Jones had four weeks to sculpt the lot: a seven-piece head makeup, a two-piece body suit and two arm prosthetics. The crew seems impressed with what we've done. The trick was to make her sexy because inside there's a thin woman we had to make look like Clare without the skin. There were some interesting reactions when she [actress Deborah Joel] arrived on the set for the first time."

"It's nice to sculpt something and see it up on the screen without covering it in blood or slime."
—makeup FX designer Geoff Portass

At this point, Portass is called away to answer a query concerning a key sequence on Ken Russell's new film, *The Lair of the White Worm*, based on the Bram Stoker novel, for which Image Animations also provides the FX.

"It's chaos at the moment," he apologizes once the call is over. "*White Worm* started shooting at Shepperton last week. It's low-budget with a five-week schedule, and we've been doing that concurrently with this. Again, I've designed everything, with Bob being away, and all the responsibility and creative demands have stretched me to the limit, but *White Worm*'s going to be fun. There are some typically weird Russell dream sequences—you know, nuns impaled, men with sharpened phallic extensions, stuff like that," he laughs.

Future projects on the Image Animations roster include the possibility of *Waxwork II* and *The Unholy II*, but in the immediate future there's *Changer*, written by longtime crew member Cliff Wallace, which Bob Keen hopes to direct, and two more collaborations with Clive Barker: *Cabal* and the long awaited Harry D'Amour project, tentatively budgeted at $16 million. "*Cabal* may go into production before the Harry D'Amour picture," Portass believes. "It's smaller in scope and will give us more breathing room before tackling the other, which at this stage has over 30 creatures in it. That's going to be our big breakthrough.

"Well, I hardly had a Christmas holiday last year, and it's starting to look like I won't have one this year, either," concludes Geoff Portass as Pinhead leaves to get into costume. "But we've got some interesting things planned, which should make it all worthwhile." ✸

REVIEW

Some people cut hair with scissors, some people cut hair with clippers . . .

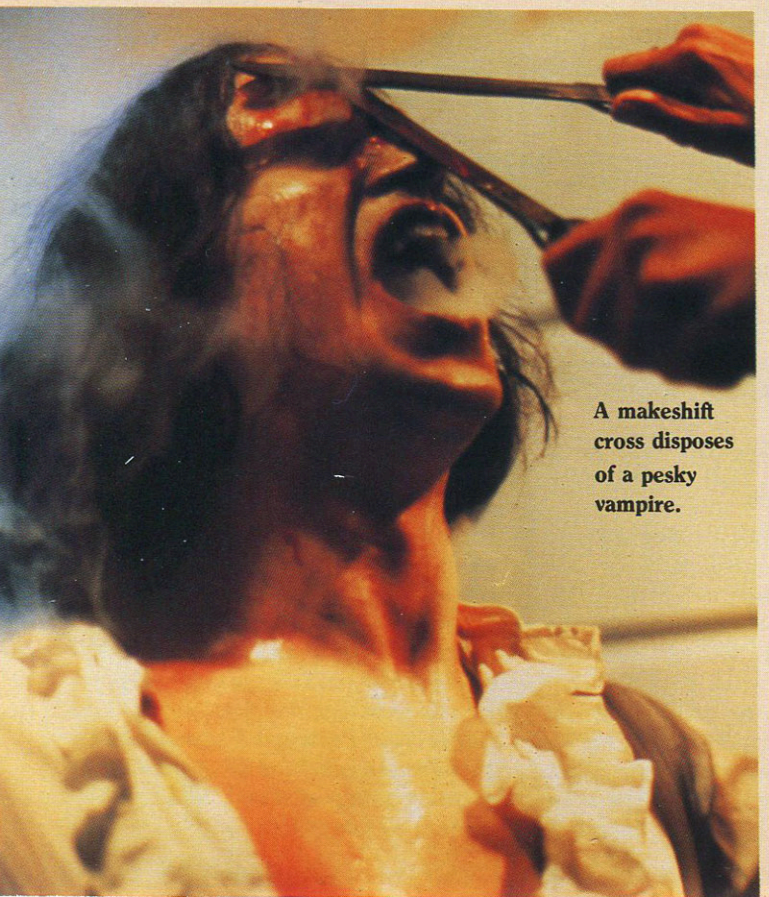
WAXWORK

". . . ambitious, stylish but uneven teen horror comedy."

By MICHAEL WELDON

Here's another first-time directorial effort that steals ideas from old horror classics and adds those 1980s box office requirements, teens and humor. Vestron Pictures' *Waxwork* has a fun cast, a few standout scenes, and is usually technically excellent. It's too bad that the jokey dialogue isn't funny, you can't care about the rich obnoxious preppies who die, and the script is a disaster.

A group of college students visit a wax museum that seems to have appeared overnight on a suburban street. Whenever anyone steps over the guard rope, he or she becomes an unwilling permanent victim in a wax horror display that temporarily comes to life. There's no crazy sculptor covering people in wax, but even with today's state-of-the-art FX, *Waxwork* has one thing in common with those older movies—the surprisingly realistic wax figures are really actors, and they move! Can't anybody in Hollywood stand still for 10 seconds? Although monsters from many movies appear, the main inspiration is a hard-to-locate 1924 German anthology film called *Das Wachsfigurenkabinett* (a.k.a. *Waxworks*). This new *Waxwork* will be easy to find when it's released on video (about a month after its brief theatrical run). You might want to rent a copy just to see (or tape) two outstanding parts.



A makeshift cross disposes of a pesky vampire.

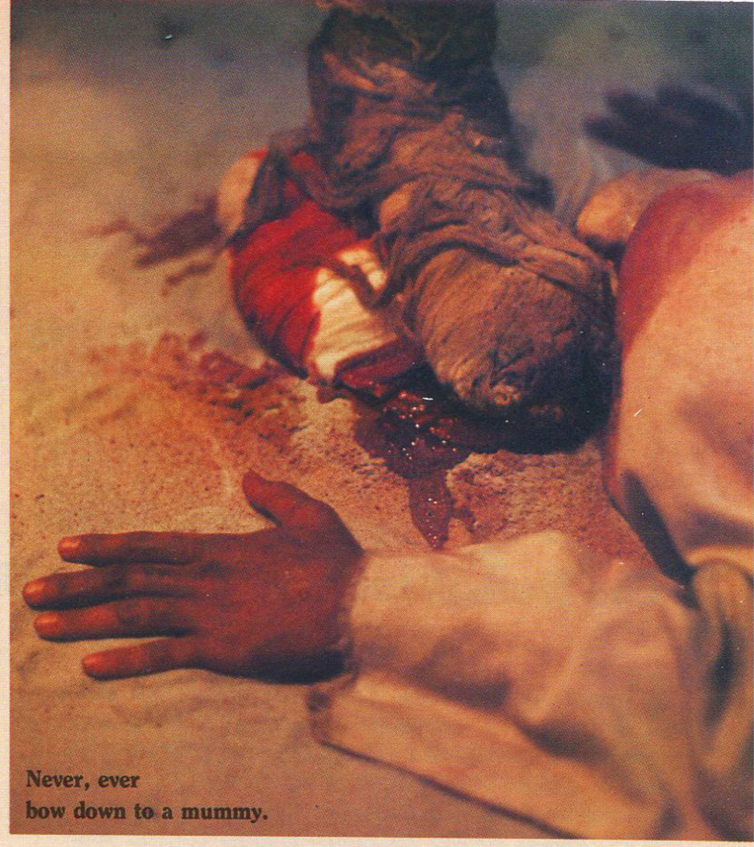
The vampire segment is the goriest I've ever seen! It has more blood and guts than even *Andy Warhol's Dracula*. Dracula is played by Miles O'Keefe, known to bad movie fans as Bo Derek's Tarzan and Ator in three sub-*Conan* Italian rip-offs. His victim is Michelle Johnson, who looks great even though she doesn't take her clothes off like she did in *Blame It On Rio*. Anyway, the vampires are cannibals, and there's some poor guy strapped to a table with most of his leg chewed off, screaming. Good stuff! Another highlight is when star Zach (*Gremlins*) Galligan stumbles into a *Night of the Living Dead* display. The short, faithful black and white recreation of Romero's classic was a real surprise and impressively shot.

All of *Waxwork* has excellent, clever cinematography, good period costumes and overdone sound FX (usually for laughs). The adjectives "lush" and "colorful" also come to mind. Some of the monsters are good, others resemble rejects from a Saturday morning kids show. Actually, *Waxwork* could have been a more mature version of *The Monster Squad*, with all the traditional Hollywood creatures running around, but the producer and director seem more interested in a very adult, out-of-place S & M scene which they both act in. They must have made a list—*Dracula*, *The Mummy*, *The Wolf Man*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, the Marquis de Sade (?!). Token virgin Deborah (*Valley Girl*) Foreman has her first orgasm while being brutally whipped. New love Galligan is forced to watch.

For the record, *Waxwork* also features Dana Ashbrook (not to be confused with Dana Andrews from *Curse of the Demon*), who was in the terrible comedy/horror sequel *Return of the Living Dead, Part II*, and as a cop, Charles McCaughan, currently in the new big deal mainstream would-be hit *Slaves of New York*. By the way, why do so many of the characters in *Waxwork* smoke so much? Was this project backed by the tobacco lobby?

I also wonder why *Waxwork* has jokes about Estonia (a small Baltic country attacked by Germany in early WWII, then engulfed by the USSR) and Hitler. Maybe they should have used a Hitler wax figure as a character so that *Waxwork* could play future Nazi horror film festivals with *They Saved Hitler's Brain*, *Flesh Feast* and *The Frozen Dead*. Instead, someday it'll play on a double bill with *Nightmare*

All Photos: Melissa Moseley/Copyright 1988 Vestron



Never, ever bow down to a mummy.

in Wax starring the one and only Cameron Mitchell.

Director/writer Anthony Hickox is the son of director Douglas (*Theater of Blood*) Hickox. His great-grandfather was famous British film mogul Lord Rank. Young Anthony convinced three well-known British actors to appear in his (made in LA) movie. *Raiders of the Los Ark* vet John Rhys-Davies, a sort of mean version of Mr. French from *Family Affair*, has a very brief role as a man who turns into another actor made up like a floppy-eared werewolf. David Warner made cinema history when he was realistically decapitated in *The Omen*; this time he seems a little bored playing the owner of the mystical wax museum. Patrick Macnee (whose *Avengers* series should be on TV daily instead of *Charlie's Angels*) has a more fun role as a wheelchair bound savior of the world. (That's right—all those famous monsters are gonna take over the whole sorry planet!) The most famous person in the whole movie barely even rates on the cast list. Who cares if you can't understand his mangled English? He's Mischa, the Tom Thumb of the 20th century, and he'll play more cities this year than this ambitious, stylish but uneven teen horror comedy.

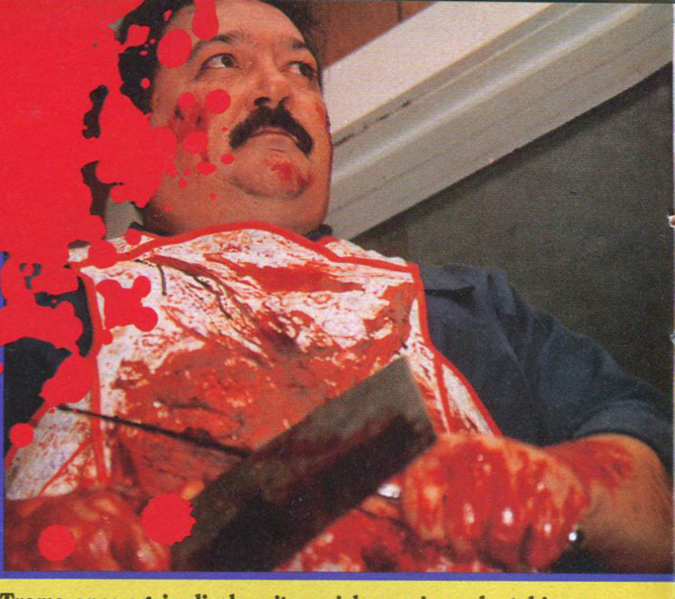
If Hickox makes more movies, I hope *Waxwork II* isn't one of them. Maybe he should remake *The Story of O.* ●

***Waxwork* features the goriest vampire sequence you have ever seen. Really. Trust us.**

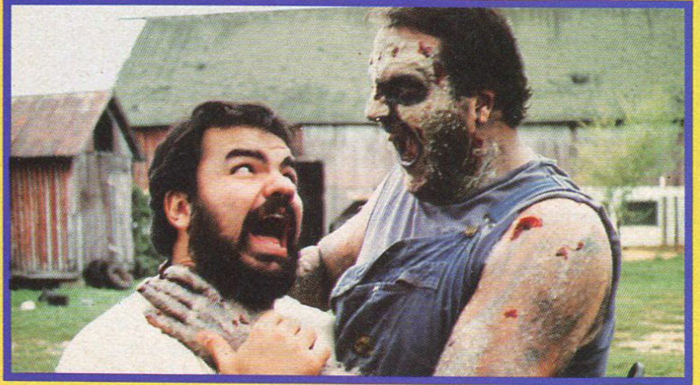
HorrorScopE

REDNECK ZOMBIES

The Bumpkins Walk Among Us



Troma once again displays its social conscience by taking on the continued threat of toxic wastes in *Redneck Zombies.*



All Photos: Troma

Director Lewnes suffers for making fun of Ed Bishop's deliberately shoddy makeups.

Troma, Inc., the New York slums' incorrigible answer to the quickie independent producers of yore, have acquired this homegrown video oddity for what will certainly be a video-only release. Although there are selected situations available where shoebox theaters run video movies, *Redneck Zombies* will enjoy its finest hour in your living room. Produced on a budget designed by Jack Benny, the fan energy pulls this backwoods, belly-bangin' tale of terror above the more common direct-to-video fare.

"The idea was conceptualized by myself, Ed Bishop and George Scott, who were also the co-producers," explains director Pericles Lewnes. "We are all basically anti-nuke types. The idea of a zombie plague spreading through toxic waste was our ridiculous way of making a statement film, via the Ed Wood approach. We hit on the idea of moonshine and a bunch of *really* stupid redneck characters getting ahold of something that should be in no person's hands, then doing the worst possible thing with it."

The 32-day shoot stretched over a year of weekends and miles of videotape. "We raised money from producing local commercials and pushed the profits right on through to the *Redneck* budget, which was under a million dollars," smirks Lewnes, holding back a chuckle. "It was shot in and around Delmar, Maryland. We also shot in Dover, Delaware, and Annapolis, Maryland."

The cast of hillbilly hicks was portrayed by Lewnes and company. Lewnes recruited himself as the sexually confused Billy Bob-Ellie Mae. "Ed Bishop plays an idiot brother named Junior and George Scott portrays Bob," Lewnes lists. "The picture's real star is Henry Dicker, who plays 'Ferd Mertz.' He really makes the film. Poor Lisa DeHaven is Lisa. She has to be the most splattered actress since Marilyn Burns in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*."

Posting "Zombies Wanted" signs in local supermarkets, the production company enjoyed the free services of residents for the climactic zombie siege. In keeping with the zombie-parody nature of the screenplay, it was decided to produce makeup that poked fun as well. "We're having fun with zombie movies in general, the whole genre," the director insists. "Due to the budget limitations, we went with less than sophisticated makeup. The audience might look at it and think it's questionable, but suddenly someone will get split in two or have his head torn off. We literally have huge bloodbaths happening, so it comes off more shocking."

Indeed, this reporter was completely shocked by the amazing realism of a head blasted apart with a shotgun. Viewers will be totally convinced that the producers decided to waste actor Ed Bishop! This landmark effect shines. "No one believed that it would work," Lewnes divulges. "I really can't tell you how we did it. I will tell you that after the scene, we sent him up to Stepford!"

With answer print in hand, the filmmakers shipped a copy to Troma, having noticed the company's "anti-nuke" parodies like *The Toxic Avenger* and *Class of Nuke 'Em High*. "We noticed that Troma had our type of movies there, little movies with big ideas. We sent them a screening copy, they saw it and loved it. We've gotten good promotion, and we have no complaints," beams Lewnes, who's now serving as FX supervisor on *The Toxic Avenger Part II*.

Waiting on-deck for its home-vid appearance, *Redneck Zombies* still has this correspondent convinced that Ed Bishop never made it out alive!

— Tim Ferrante

Is *Redneck Zombie* just another Troma hand job?

the stuff

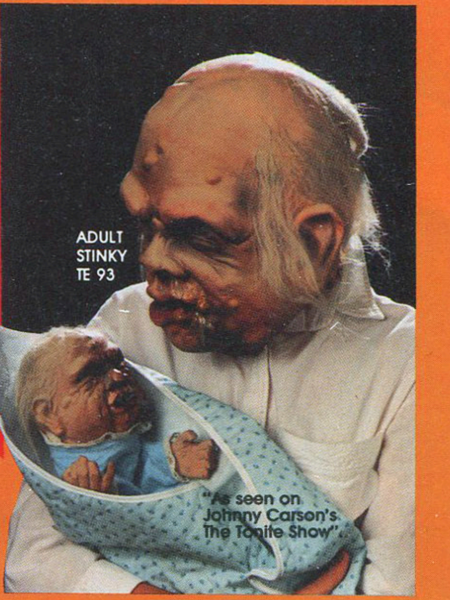
Nightmares

are made of. . . .

SCREAMER
TE 89

HACK
TE 74

ANDROMEDA
TE 68



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* SYNGENOR
TE 103

BLASTED TE 83

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VAMPIRE
TE 90

DEATH TE 81

ZOMBIE
TE 64

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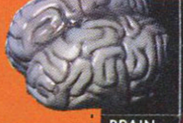
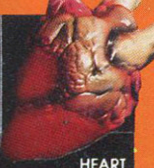
VA 95



BRAIN
JA 48



HEART
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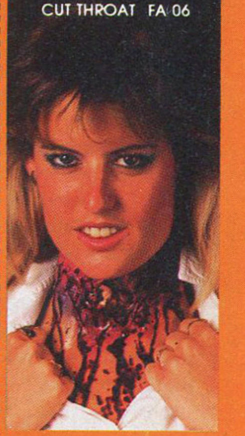

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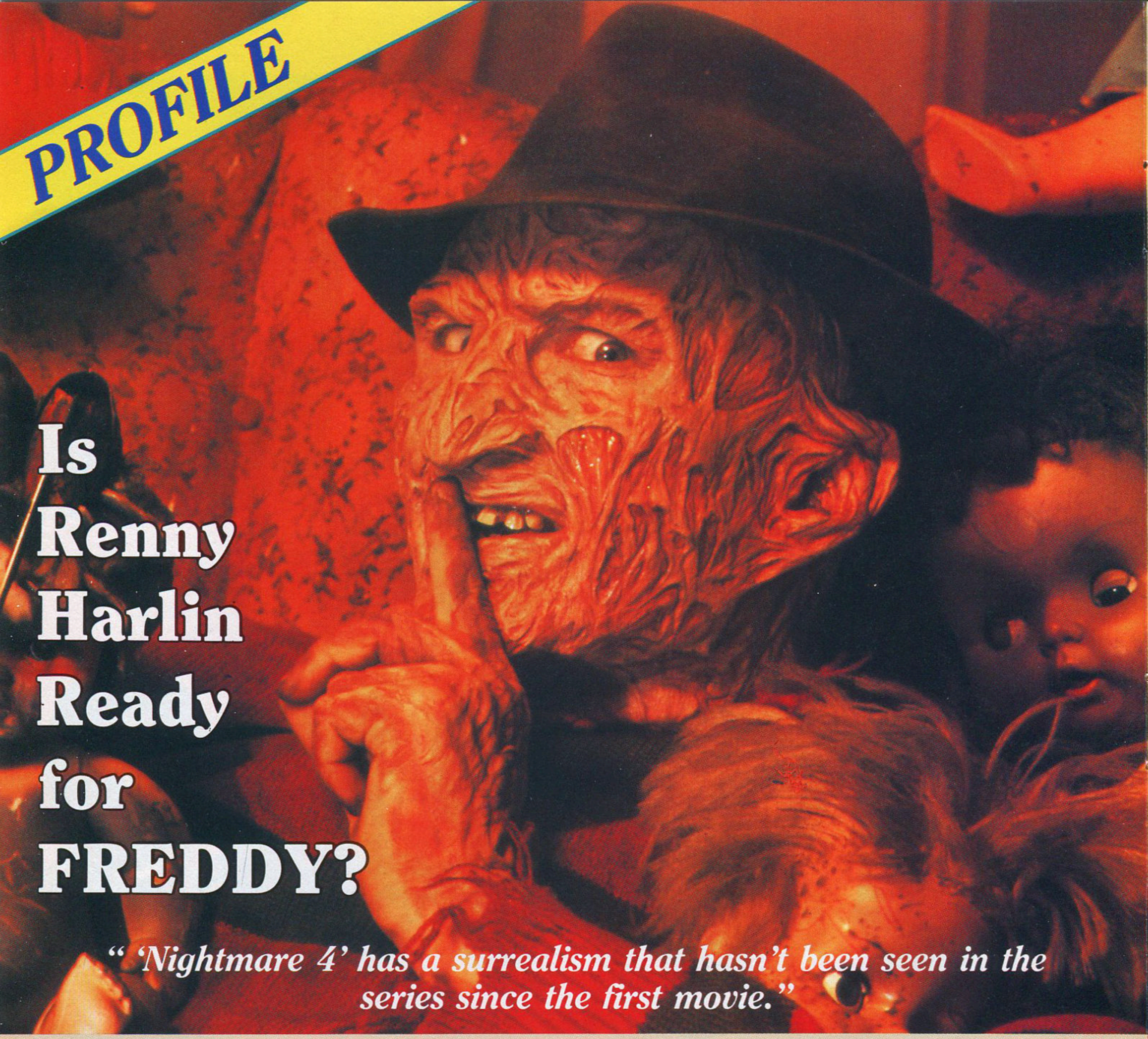
PROFILE

Is Renny Harlin Ready for FREDDY?



" 'Nightmare 4' has a surrealism that hasn't been seen in the series since the first movie."

Photo: Francois Duhamel

By MARC SHAPIRO

With a little more luck, director Renny Harlin could end up as the genre's answer to Ingmar Bergman.

Renny Harlin has a different world view of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films. He does not see the latest installment of the series as so much a horror film as a coming of age story; Freddy Krueger is not so much a dream killer in this director's eyes as he is a heroic James Bond or Rocky. All of which has got to tell you what kind of workout Freddy is getting in *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master*.

Auteur terms coming from the lips of this Finnish director are not too surprising. Harlin, bearded, bespectacled and with an accent that betrays his European roots, seems cookie-cuttered out of a cinematic world drenched in dark and shadow. To say that his film style (earlier on display in the patriotic *Born American* and the critically acclaimed but marginally-released *Prison*) is "out there" is an understatement.

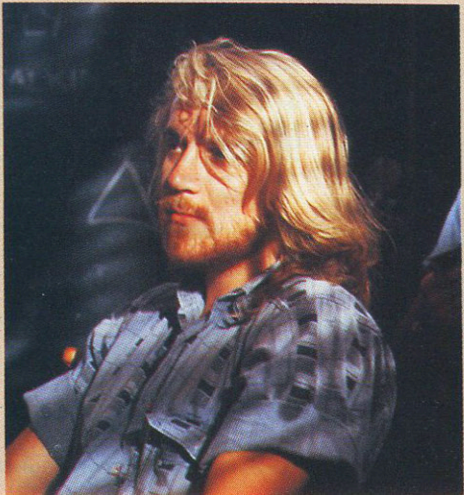


Photo: Gary Farr

Harlin's atmospheric style fits perfectly into the latest Freddyfest, which shows a hitherto-unseen philosophical side of the acclaimed murderer. Winding down to Kristen (Tuesday Knight, filling in the role essayed by Patricia Arquette in *Nightmare 3*), Krueger realizes that by killing the last of the Elm Street kids, he will end his own nefarious existence. Thus, it becomes necessary to force Kristen into pulling other teens (new blood, if you will) inside Freddyland. Unfortunately for the Gloved One, she brings in Alice (Lisa Wilcox), a young girl with a virtual powerhouse of dream energy, who resolves to fight Freddy to the death.

"I'm always concerned with the visual side of a film," sums up Harlin of his quick-cut-and-jump approach to moviemaking. "I like to use a steady camera, a moving camera, all the gadgets that can make a film visually pleasing. I realize I'm making films primarily for an audience raised on MTV and flashy commercials, so a movie must look great. I spend a lot of time trying to visualize things in the most exciting way. With *Nightmare 4*, I've been emphasizing the light and shadows for a creepy, unnerving effect."

True to his word, Harlin on the set spends as much time playing with lighting patterns and the angles on stationary and moving cameras as he does with actors. Even the most pedestrian shot gets the patented Harlin visual grope, and this dedication to being picture-perfect has not been lost on *Nightmare 4*'s cast and crew.

"Renny as a director seems to have an eye for all facets of the *Nightmare* films," applauds Robert Englund. "He's hip to the rollercoaster ride and the action that these films must have, and yet he's got a great eye for the sick and the offbeat side of things that a less skillful and subtle director might miss. He has an instinctive feel for what is downright scary in this movie."

Also downright scary is Harlin's penchant for being superprepared. "I like to plan every facet of the film well in advance. With *The Dream Master*, I storyboarded every scene in the film well before production ever began," claims Harlin.

> **"Renny's got a great eye for the sick and offbeat side of things. . . [and] an instinctive feel for what is downright scary."**
> **—Robert Englund**

Renny Harlin was born and raised in Helsinki, Finland. By the age of 11, Harlin was already going the home movie route and, with visions of his idols Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford dancing in his head, set his eyes on a film career. He entered film school in Finland and emerged five years later into an industry that seemed to welcome him with open arms. But 100 commercials and 10 television features and documentaries later, Harlin suddenly found himself blocked at every turn.

"I had reached a point where I wanted to start making major motion pictures," declares Harlin. "The only problem is that in Finland, all features are government-financed, so you have to go through this whole precensorship thing of submitting your script for government approval. If they like it, you get the money to make your movie." Unfortunately, Finland's taste in movies run to noncommercial, superartsy pictures that only a small segment of its populace ever gets to see (which explains why only an average of seven films a

"Shake it up, baby, now," giggles Krueger as he does the twist on a hapless teen.

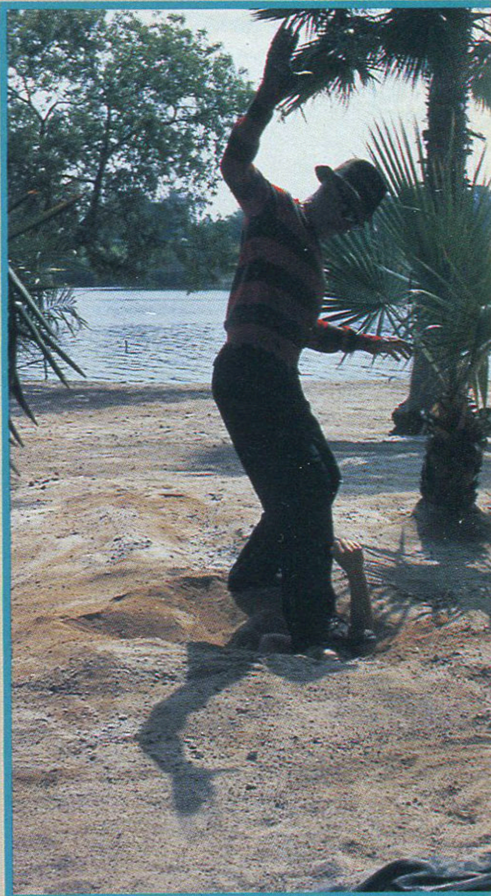
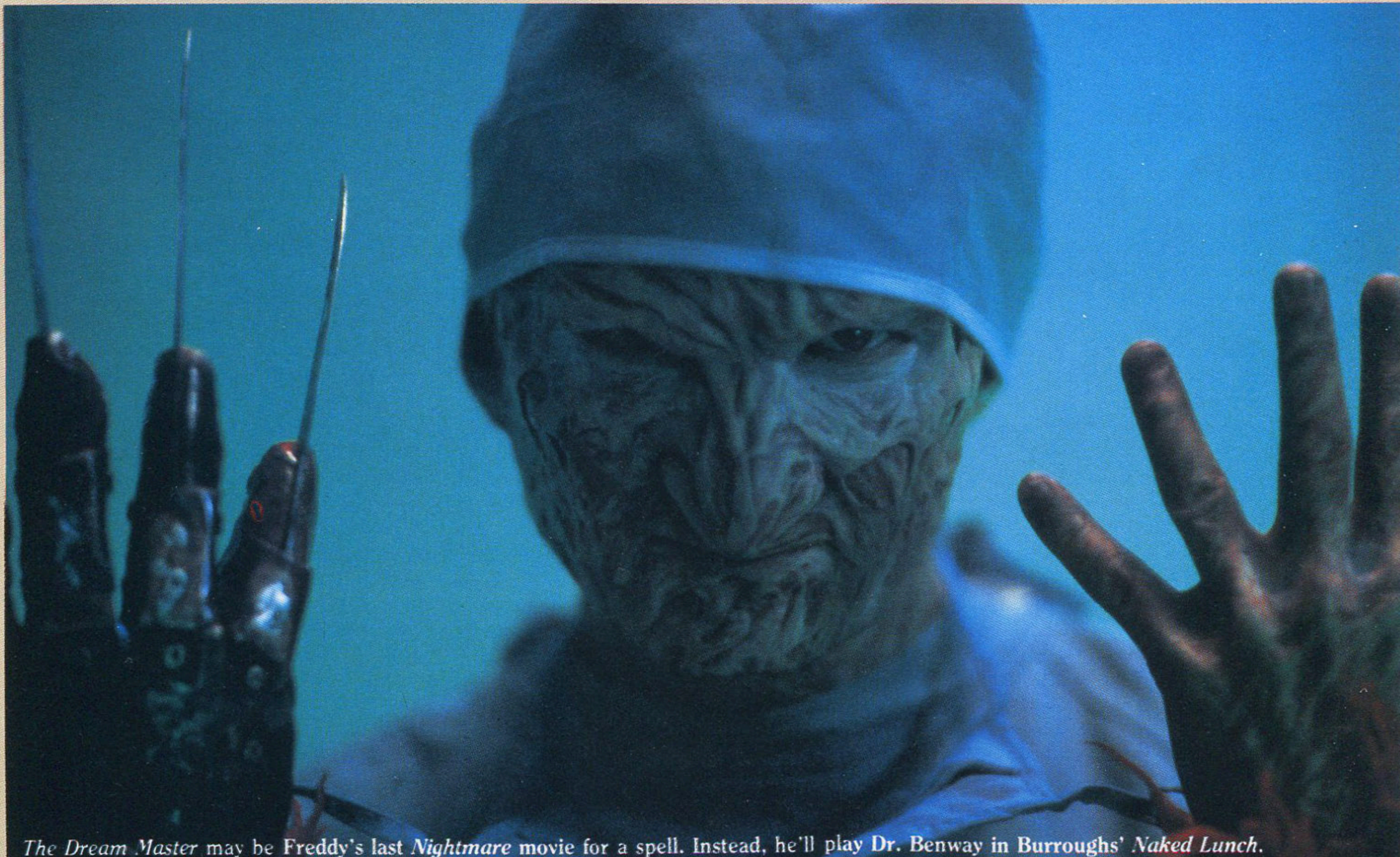


Photo: Rory Flynn

All Photos: Copyright 1988 New Line



The Dream Master may be Freddy's last *Nightmare* movie for a spell. Instead, he'll play Dr. Benway in Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*.

Photo: Gary Farr

Photo: Francois Duhamel

Chow time on the set. Note the facial features on that hors d'oeuvre.

> **"I have no intention of doing another *Nightmare* film . . . new people with fresh visions must be constantly brought in."**

year get made in the country) while Harlin's taste runs to commercial and mass appeal efforts. Needless to say, the twain never met.

"I sent them as many as 10 scripts, and they always came back with notes saying that the stories were too commercial," Harlin shrugs. "The government wanted movies that only 5,000 people would ever see, and I wanted to make movies that would be seen by millions all over the world."

Finally, in desperation, Harlin and a fellow filmmaker wrote *Born American*, had it translated into English and took their creative frustration on the road. "We came to Hollywood," he remembers, "and basically started knocking on doors, trying to get people interested in this script. We were so naive, we were going through the yellow pages. We knew what we were doing was totally insane, but we felt that calling up complete strangers was the only way."

Somehow, this brand of bravado resulted in Harlin's scraping together enough money (mostly his own) to return to his homeland with kung fu king Chuck Norris' son Mike and create the first 20 minutes of the patriotic action adventure yarn *Born American*. Harlin cut that first bit of film together, returned to the States with his bundle of joy and once again began knocking on doors.

Photo: Francois Duhamel

Elm Street University, class of '88.

"Cinema Group took a look at what we'd done and liked it enough to put up the money to complete the project," he recalls proudly. "We returned to Finland, finished the movie and watched it open at 1,100 theaters. The movie has also done real well on video."

Easily one of the highlights of the director's debut project was Harlin's interpretation of a Russian prison camp. In his hands, the scenes literally dripped discomfort in an oblique and desolate way. It was his work in those scenes that convinced producer Irwin Yablans that Harlin was the guy to jump-start his behind-bars horror Empire effort, *Prison*.

"Irwin Yablans thought my ability to create a dark, wet and horrible place was exactly what was needed," the director explains. "He also liked my use of quick cuts without going crazy, like they do in *Miami Vice*."

In typical Harlin fashion, the director prepped for *Prison* duty by storyboarding the entire film (approximately 1,200 illustrations) and talking to real prisoners at the nearby Wyoming State Prison (*Prison* was filmed in a deserted jailhouse in Rawlings, Wyoming) to get the personal as well as cinematic lay of the land. The director recalls that his horror breakthrough was a tough nut to crack. The six-week shoot with no second unit, however, played right into Harlin's creative hands. The deserted corridors and cellblocks gave off an aura of natural horror.

Emotionally, things got pretty scary, too. "We used real prisoners as extras," reports Harlin. "So it was always in the back of our minds that somebody might use the confusion of a movie being made to escape—or to do something even worse. Nothing like that happened, and I was later told the reason was that the prisoners were promised reduced sentences or some privileges if they cooperated with us. They definitely did, so I hope they got what they were promised."

Prison received a short theatrical release earlier this year and is currently doing solid video business. Harlin's stock continued to soar when the big cheeses at New Line caught the director's *Prison* act and decided his auteur tastes were just the touch needed for *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master.*

The New Line people approached me after seeing *Prison*," he reveals, "and told me they felt my approach to *Prison* was just the element they were looking for in the new *Nightmare* film. I was a great fan of the series, so this was a great opportunity."

But not an opportunity to be taken lightly. The director had a number of meetings with Robert Englund and found that the man who would be Freddy shared the evolving feel of the character and the creative possibilities of a fourth installment. "I initially felt strange about doing a fourth segment," concedes Harlin. "But I felt Freddy Krueger's status as the hero of these films was something that could be exploited in an arty action-oriented way. And to my way of thinking, I believe we've captured the essence of the *Nightmare* films in a truly scary way."

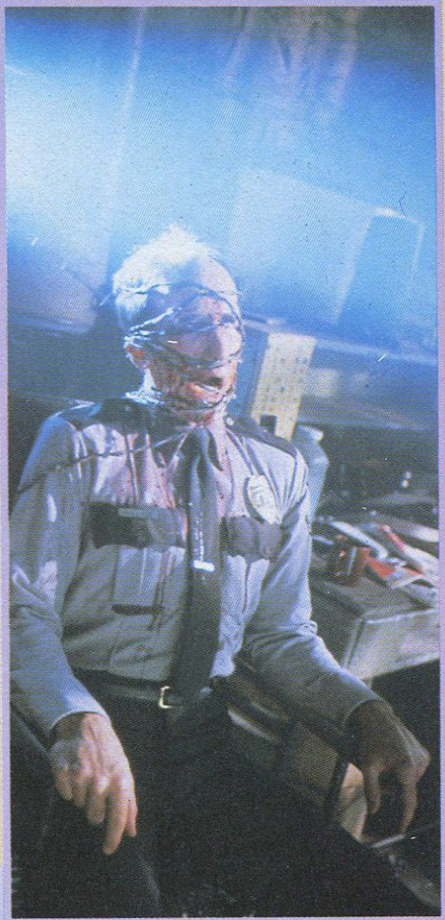
No kidding! With *Nightmare 4*'s success already assured, talk at New Line, on the street and up your block is that Harlin should be the first director in the series to get a second shot, with the already-projected *Nightmare 5*. Harlin says thanks but no thanks.

"I have no intention of doing another *Nightmare* film," he counters. "I don't think these films are conducive to any director doing more than one. For the *Nightmare* films to remain fresh, I believe new people with fresh visions must be constantly brought in."

Of course, Harlin's refusal has more than creative integrity at its core. "I'm totally against the idea of being typed as a horror filmmaker," he frowns. "Horror moviemaking is a joy, and dealing with the special effects is like playing with toys, but I definitely want to do other kinds of movies. The next film I do will be a suspense thriller or a detective story. I'd also like to attempt a Western and a comedy at some point."

Harlin, who never strays far from a studious tone when discussing his short cinematic history, mellows out a bit when asked to sum up his fledgling career to date.

"What can I say, when so much has happened in a space of two years?" Renny Harlin chuckles. "Except that I've been incredibly lucky."



The atmospheric *Prison* was Renny Harlin's resume for his *Nightmare 4* gig.

Nightmare 4 holds surprises even for Mr. K.

Photo: Francois Duhamel

Joey Belladonna:

STAIRWAY TO HELL

"...I'd come up with a mouthful of coffee grounds and Cheerios. I was choking..."

By GREG FASOLINO

Vocalist Belladonna's stint in Anthrax's "Indians" video earned him his *Pledge Night* role.

Take your average aspiring rock star and give him a chance to partake in a nasty horror flick, and he's guaranteed to get an evil gleam in his eye, just like us lowly mortals. For amiable Joey Belladonna, singer of New York thrash-metal outfit Anthrax, his first stab at acting was an impossible offer to turn down.

Pledge Night, the movie in question, reads like a cross between *Animal House* and *Friday the 13th*. Back in those good ol' days of the 1960s, aspiring frat hippie Sid Snyder (Belladonna) goes through his initiation. (And we thought hippies of that era wouldn't be caught dead joining a frat!) The initiation ceremony turns into a gory hazing tragedy, however, when his frat brothers plunge him into a vat of assorted icky substances, one of which accidentally happens to be acid.

Sid dies, of course, his flesh devoured by the ravenous chemical. Twenty years later, the now-murderous "Acid Sid" returns to mutilate the latest pledge class (including, by a twist of fate, his son) in various ghastly ways.

Despite a somewhat short stay on the set, Belladonna appears to have had some tangible input into his performance. "I put a lot of my own thing into the character," he says. "I had to make

Photos: M. Neuprez/SGE

Sid cuts right to the heart of the '60s.

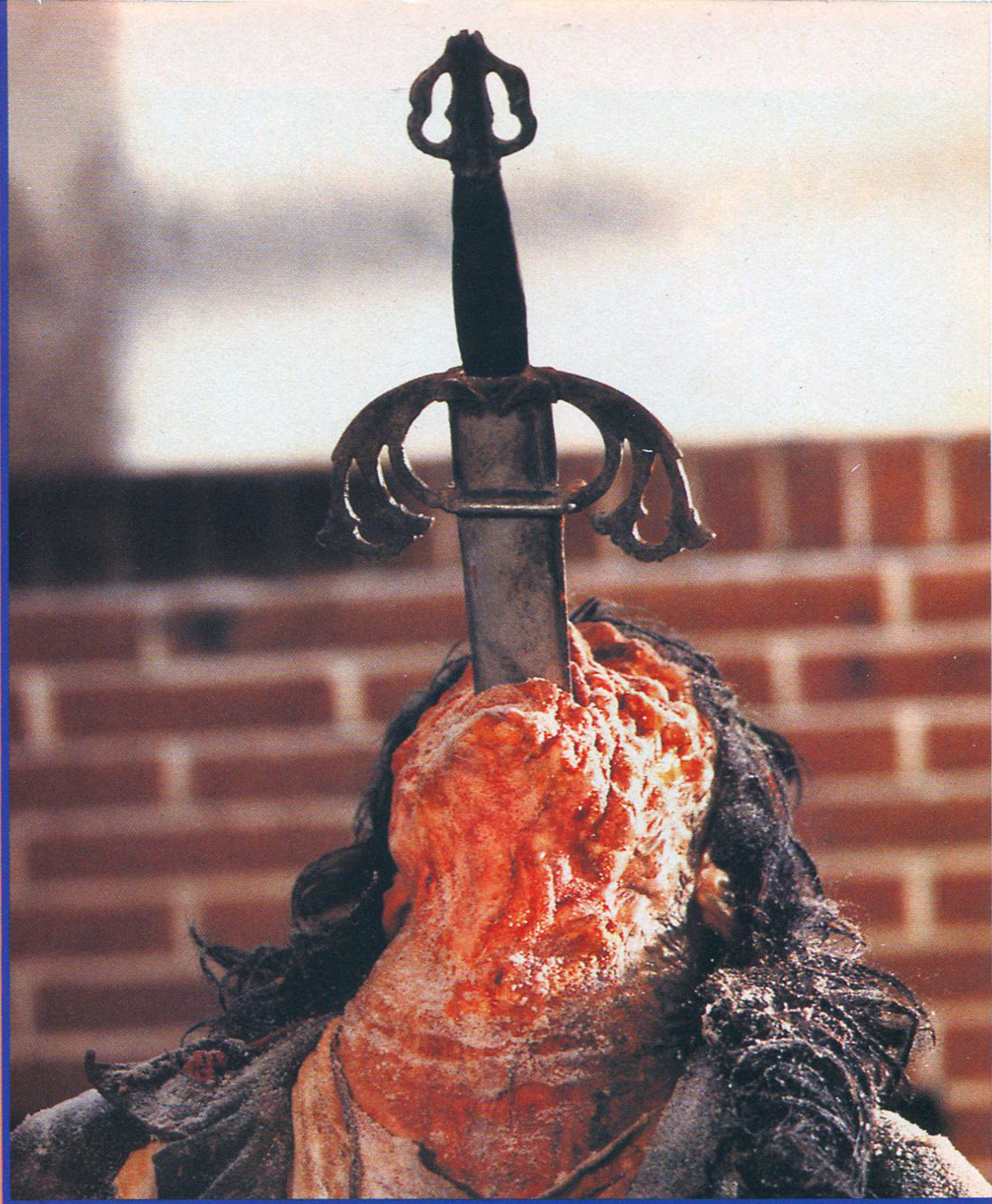
myself into the druggie kind of hippie, you know, the 'I don't care about anything, bleep you' attitude. But all that I was required to do was swear myself in and act stoned. Even that was so quick. I said the pledge and then [*in slurred drug-induced tone*], 'Which way to the protest, maaan?' They say, 'Silence!' I turn around and *bang*! Right in the water I go. All of a sudden, the fun starts."

Like most music frontmen, Belladonna relished the chance to get in front of the cameras, but his celluloid death proved a hellish undertaking in its own right. "Doing up the act was pretty wild!" he grins. "It was weird, too, because I'd come up with a mouthful of coffee grounds and Cheerios. I was choking on the coffee grounds and kept spitting it out. I had to come back and dub a few parts in, but I got most of it. We did it in about eight takes or so, but I had to sit in that freezing tub for a while, focusing. It was really cold in the basement, *quite* cold. Plus, they kept putting this liquid over my eye with the makeup. I had the appliance around my eye, and I would just rip it up and it started foaming. They kept putting stuff on there each time I came up, so that when I came up I'd look worse, like I was bubbling away."

One of the more enjoyable experiences that befell Belladonna in his acting debut was the recording session for the death scene screams. "We went up into one of the frat brothers' rooms," he recalls. "They set up a mike, and then I let loose! That was even fun, 'cause it was like singing. I was like, 'Man, I gotta get this done, 'cause there ain't no way I'm coming back.' And I was still soaked from the tub scene. I was drenched, actually, shivering to death."

Belladonna fesses up to a little pang of disappointment that *Pledge Night*, due this fall from Shapiro Glickenhaus Entertainment, was only a trashy B movie. "I guess you have to start at the beginning, though," he philosophizes, "Like with Anthrax, we don't want to go too far in playing shows. We like to build it up and don't get too crazy. Just gradually do it, and not go over our heads."

One scene sure to interest the discriminating gruehound was securely lodged in his memory banks. A noted author (if memory serves, Stephen King) once said that, as a child, the thought that made his blood run coldest was imagining sliding down a staircase, only to find the banister had transformed into a razor blade. Mankind, it seems, is deathly afraid of nasty genital mutilations. It's such a bloodcurdling way to get mauled that most filmmakers have avoided it. . . until now. To add insult to (ahem!) injury, perhaps the place we all feel most secure is seated comfortably on the john, contentedly perusing our latest issue of GOREZONE. . . and, of course, never expecting anything to attack the family jewels. Naturally, Acid Sid has to do just that in *Pledge Night*, rising up from the depths of the toilet and ripping a hapless victim's testicles clean off. Nauseated, are you?



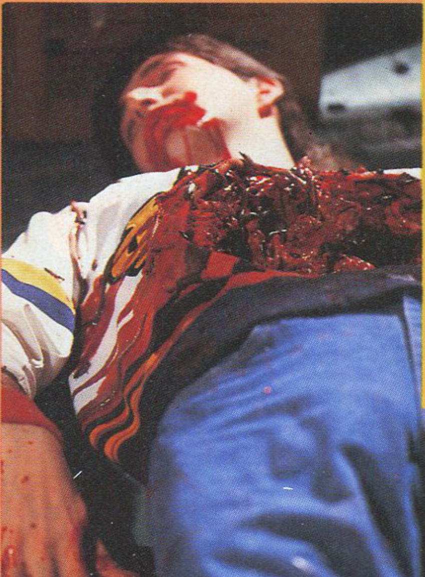
Say, give that sword to Acid Sid. He'll eat *anything*.

Another, much less imaginative kill scene invovles yet one more *ALIEN*esque torso emergence. "I go inside this one guy, supposedly," Belladonna recounts. "I just let loose, coming out of his body somehow, as if he was possessed."

Sadly enough, the rocker missed out on all this blood-spattering fun. Because of prior commitments to Anthrax, he had only enough time to run in and do the "pre-Acid" Sid scenes, before being whisked out to tour with the group. Meanwhile, the film people utilized actor Will Kempe to emote as the "undead" version of Sid. Sounds ridiculous? Well, like the man said, it *is* a B picture, though that didn't keep him from feeling disappointed at not getting to play the entire role. "But then again, a lot of peo-

Anthrax: just a bunch of guys singing about gore.

Here's one frat fellow with brains.



Acid Sid (Will Kempe) prepares to rise from the gut.

Sid becomes one of the few hippies who *really* got into acid.

ple don't do that anyway," he sighs. "I mean, there's stunt stuff going on all the time, and no one cares."

How did a friendly metal man such as Belladonna get involved in the first place with such a low-budget sleazoid terror tale? Apparently, through the auspices of band manager Johnny Z. "ICM had contacted our management, asking if I would be interested in doing the movie," he explains. "They requested me. They'd seen the 'Indians' video [an MTV favorite, in which Joey prances about decked out in warpaint and feathered headdress] and figured I'd be good for the part. I was like an Indian hippie."

At presstime, the movie underwent a surprising change of title from the sinister-sounding alliteration of *A Hazing in Hell* to the somewhat tame, not to mentioned hackneyed, *Pledge Night* (which also sounds far too much like *Prom Night*). This news manages to catch Belladonna by surprise; he was even less well-informed than this representative. He hadn't heard a peep about the switch, but after some thought declares it might have been a wise decision. "Well, *A Hazing in Hell* sounds a little cheesy in a sense, too, but the movie itself, when I watched it at first, didn't seem that scary," he offers. "It takes a little while to get going, and a lot of times you're just seeing a good deal of mediocre tortures: branding on the ass, paddling, all of them sitting on a cherry with their jockstraps and then eating the cherry. Little mediocre things. It's just a cheesy old college movie, so maybe *Pledge Night* would be good. It doesn't sound that heavy. Maybe it's a little too soft." (Soft isn't the word, Joey; it's the fright flick titular equivalent to Velveeta.)

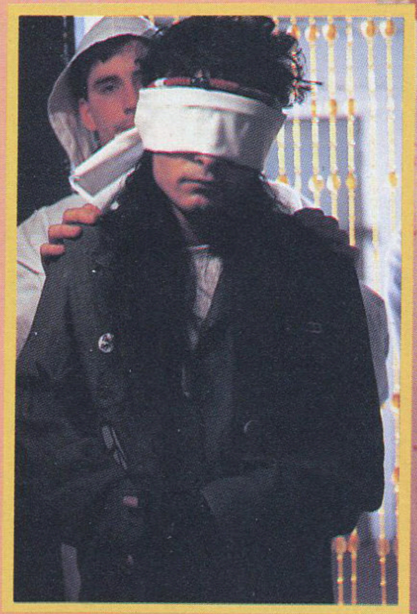
In addition to Belladonna's thespian presence, *Pledge Night* boasts a score courtesy of Anthrax. The vocalist lists the specifics: "There's three songs. Two tracks are from the EP *Armed and Dangerous*—just bits and pieces—and then there's one time where all the frat brothers are running out of the house and you hear an instrumental from *Fistful of Metal*. There's also a strip scene where this lady's doing a dance, y'know, and she was doing it to one of our songs, which was kind of cool."

Joey Belladonna is altogether pleased with the juxtaposition of Anthrax's molten metal and the carnage-laden cinematic world. "I think we fulfill the need for some of these things," he nods. "The music's got that aggression to it. If you're watching a movie, and you hear some of the pieces of music, they just fit."

For the uninitiated, what emanates from the speakers when you slap on one of his band's discs is brash, loud, high-velocity rock 'n' roll, but in all their material there lies a darker undercurrent brooding beneath the surface, a somewhat menacing aura that threatens to burst from the speakers and sink rotted fangs into your backside. The singer doesn't deny it, offering a snap analysis: "Everything's real dissonant, all minor chords. It's a real evil sound, like the doomy Black Sabbath stuff."

It would be interesting to hear what

Kids, don't try this at home.



These hazing rituals always looked a little weird for our tastes.

the band would or could do if given a real chance at creating an exclusive gore score, but all involved in *Pledge Night* instead opted for the use of already-released material. (A similar approach was used for last year's shoddy *Return of the Living Dead, Part II*, graced by versions of Anthrax's "I'm the Man" and "A.D.I./The Horror of it All.") "I wouldn't mind doing it if somebody said, 'Write something for that movie,' " Belladonna observes. "Say it was a Freddy Krueger flick. I'd just feel the whole atmosphere in the background and write something that would fit that. You should just go along with the vibe that the movie's trying to get across, something along that line. With Dokken, I don't think the 'Dream Warriors' song really fit that movie at all. I believe they wanted a pop rock band with a hit song. I don't think we'd want to do it that way; we would have a good crunchy thing that would go along and set a mood for it, rather than a hit song."

The point has been made now a multitude of times that there does indeed exist a definite link between heavy metal and horror, and the reasoning behind it is obvious: The kids who throng to the theaters when a new *Nightmare on Elm Street* roars into town are just as likely to pop Slayer, Ozzy or the Misfits onto their turntables when they get back home. Perhaps there's some sort of physiological explanation? Let's play scientist for a moment and examine what this correspondent likes to call the "EVE Hypothesis." The higher degree of EVE (Extreme Violent Entertainment) being absorbed into these mutants' systems, the more they tend to crave a bigger and bigger fix, and they usually will diversify to include anything that'll give them that adrenaline-pumping sensation, whether it be films, music or books.

Belladonna knows first-hand about the way horror and metal give one a similar sense of vicarious release. "For the kids who go and see all that stuff, both horror and heavy metal give them room to get all that feeling out," he reasons. "Even if they thought about killing someone or doing something stupid, it gives them that kind of feeling without their having to actually do it. At least they can just feel it and get the vibe. Especially in the shows, they go and let loose. That's what's good for them, and I think it's great.

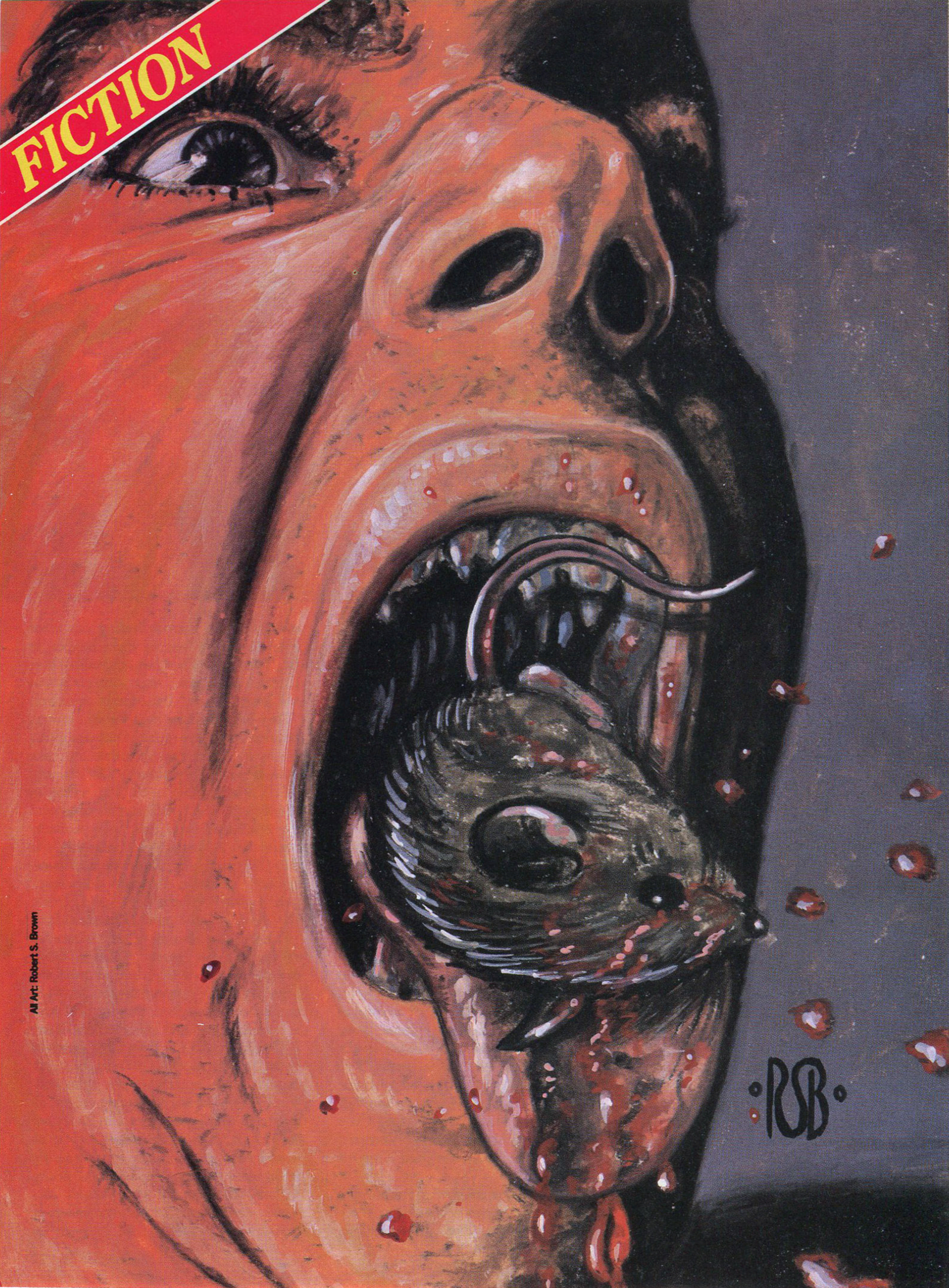
"As far as Anthrax goes, horror is simply good to write about," he continues. "We're still coming up with things inspired by movies and books on the new record, *State of Euphoria*. 'Now It's Dark' is a piece from the movie *Blue Velvet*, and we have another thing called 'Misery Loves Company,' based on the Stephen King book *Misery*. It all kind of gels together. When you hear the song, we put a lot of parts in there that would make you imagine what the book's about."

On last year's *Among the Living* LP, the astute would have already recognized an Anthraxian interest in fantasy/horror themes, via many of the songs' lyrical bent. The smashing title track (and its chilling attendant cover art) was loosely based on King's *The Stand*. "A Skeleton in the Closet" likewise referred to that writer's "Apt Pupil" novella from *Different Seasons*, while the colossally crunchy "I Am the Law" was a clever homage to everyone's favorite comicdom hero, Judge Dredd. If all that wasn't as plain as the antennae sprouting from your forehead, the "thank you" credits on the inner sleeve include this excerpt: "Bob 'Uncle Bob' Martin [whom all longtime Fango fans should remember fondly], Alan Moore, Sean [sic] Hutson, Clive Barker, Peter Straub, Anne 'Vampire' Rice, and yes, finally, Stephen King for inspiration."

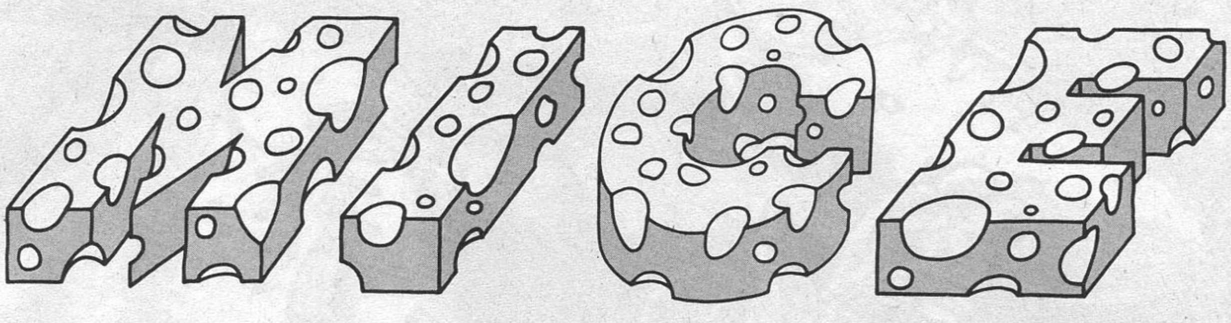
By now, you're clamoring to know the answer to the hottest question on every gorefreak's lip protuberances—yessiree, everyone just adores finding out what everyone else's favorite flicks happen to be. "*Mark of the Devil* is an incredible horror movie. When I was younger it was *real* scary for me," Belladonna shudders. "They gave us puke bags for that movie, because there were a lot of tortures going on in it. I like the old ones, too, like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. *The Fly* and *ALIEN* were done well. I'm trying to think of the one I *really* like, the one with the real big-time effects. . . I'll probably remember it tomorrow. I think it was *The Thing*. I see horror movies occasionally; actually, I mostly like good, funny comedy. I'm a big comedy freak. You can't watch horror 24 hours a day."

That last assertion is somewhat debatable, as many GOREZONE readers would testify, but at least the man has a little diversity in his life, if not an abundance of time. Busy as he is with a burgeoning band like Anthrax, Joey Belladonna doesn't have any concrete plans for film work at present, but producers, listen up: He's more than willing. He's not taking his "acting career" all that seriously (with roles like Sid, how could he?), though he makes it clear he would be open to future gore-dripping adventures if the opportunity arose. Belladonna mentally shrugs, and succinctly concludes, "I'd be into acting. It would be great fun." ✸

FICTION



All Art: Robert S. Brown



MICE

By JAMES KISNER

I.

There was a mouse in the mashed potatoes.

II.

The house was already inhabited by mice the day the Carlsons moved in.

"It's beautiful," Tricia Carlson said as her husband parked the station wagon in the newly paved driveway. "Isn't it, Karen?"

Karen looked up at her mother and nodded mutely. She was eight years old and not certain she understood the necessity of moving. She held a battered Cabbage Patch doll in her lap. Both she and the doll had yellow hair and blue eyes. The two of them closely resembled Tricia, whose hair and eyes matched theirs, though her yellow hues came from a bottle.

"Answer your mother," Bill Carlson said, his eyes watching Karen in the rearview mirror. His left eyelid twitched. He was in his late thirties, lean and well-built with light brown hair and brown eyes.

"Yes, it's nice." She tightened her grip on the doll; its name was Tessie.

Bill's face brightened. "Let's go in and look the place over before the moving van gets here."

It was a newly-built house, occupying a wedge of land among curving streets in the suburbs of Indianapolis. Its plastic and laminated surfaces glistened; the paint was barely cured on the walls.

Karen had never seen the inside of a brand new house before—one that had never had people living in it—and the novelty of the experience was almost overwhelming. Without furniture, the rooms seemed vast, especially the upstairs bedrooms and the corner room they said would be hers.

It didn't seem possible so much space could belong to her alone. The floor seemed to go on forever, carpeted in speckled beige nylon that smelled new and chemical-like in a pleasant way. It seemed to form a horizon against the inner wall, as if there were a chunk of the world in this room. Her own world. Her space. It was wonderful. The only thing that displeased her was the almond color of the walls. Pink would have been so much better and so much more like her.

She went over to the window that faced the backyard and pressed her face against the sun-warmed glass. She held the doll up next to her and aimed its painted eyes outside. Then she whispered to it and stroked its painted plastic cheeks.

"This is such a nice house, Tessie. Nothing bad could ever happen here. Only nice things."

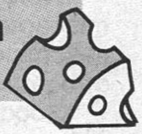
III.

It was fall by the time they settled in and Karen had returned to school. It was a new school for her, since the family now lived in a different township. The building itself was also quite new, with the architectural pretensions of most suburban institutions. But the children seemed the same; they cared only about themselves and were unappreciative of Karen.

Bill Carlson was working longer hours these days. His daughter rarely saw him, and that was one of the nice things that had begun to happen since moving to the new house. Another nice thing was that mother was preoccupied with being pregnant and was always throwing up.

So Karen could do pretty much what she wanted to do. Within some kind of reason, of course.

"You're going to kill the mice?" Karen looked up from her plate, distress obvious on her face.



Her big room was filled with furniture now—stuffed toys, educational toys, a little color television, a video game, and clothes. The room had lost some of its vastness, and become boring and uninvolving, just like the room in the other house.

But that didn't matter to Karen, because she had Tessie and a new friend that was flesh and blood.

The new friend was named Ted. He was one of the other nice things that had happened since moving.

IV.

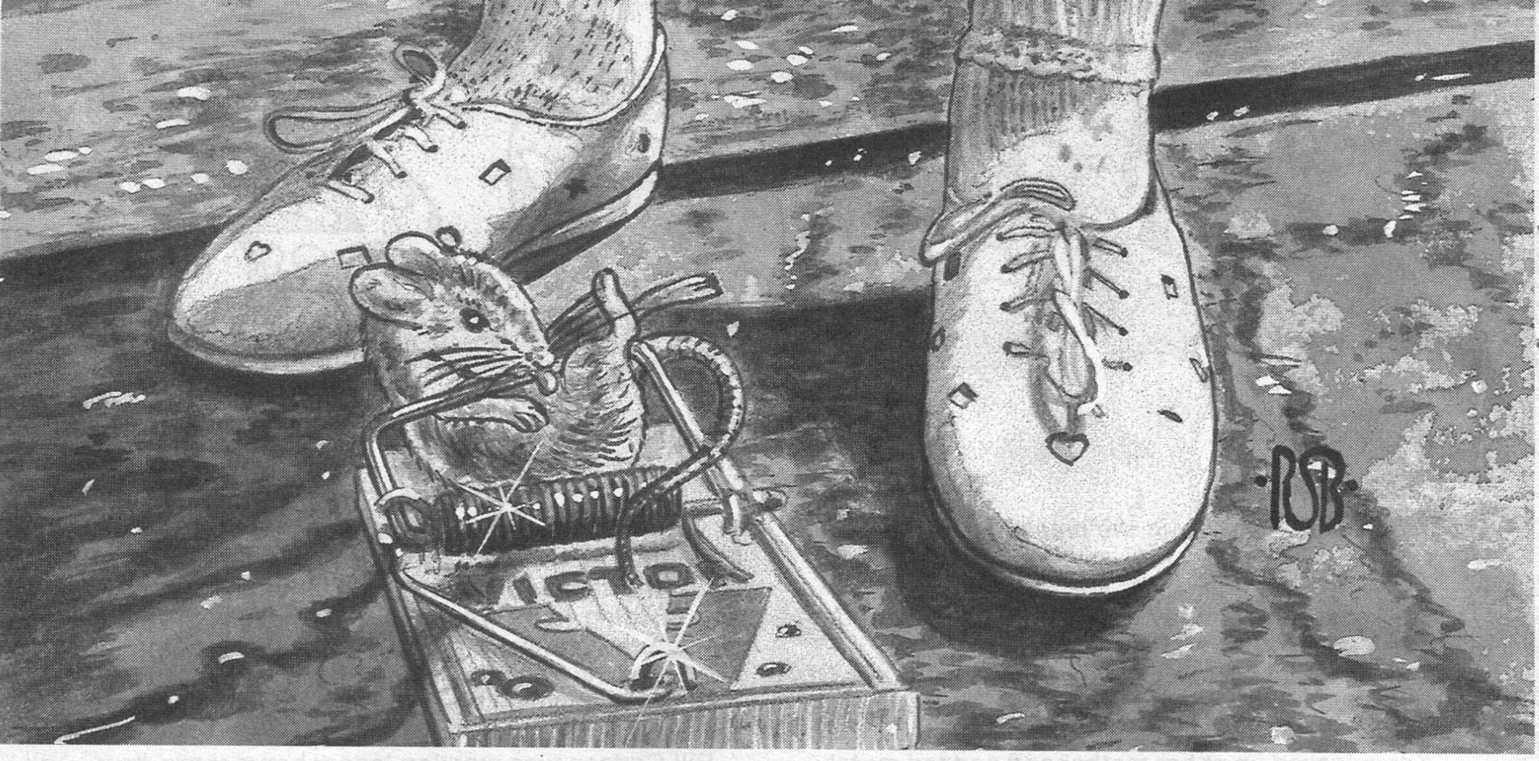
"God, it was icky," Tricia told Bill at dinner one evening. "Mouse doo-doo—in my best dishcloths!" As she spoke, she trembled, causing ripples to go up her blouse. Her breasts were growing, as was the rest of her. In another month, she would look very pregnant.

The family was sitting in the dining room, having a filling Thursday dinner: meat and gravy, rolls, lima beans in tomato sauce, and mashed potatoes.

"We're too close to the corn fields," Bill said. "I'll go out later and buy some traps."

"You're going to kill the mice?" Karen looked up from her plate, distress obvious on her face. "They're so cute."

"No one is talking to you, little lady."



"Don't be so harsh, Bill. The child has a right to know about it. After all—"

"Well, we'll talk about it later then. I'm not in the mood now. Pass me that gravy."

Tricia reached across the table and lifted the big brown ceramic bowl of thick beef gravy to her husband. "Take it quick. The smell's turning my stomach."

"I'll be glad when you get over the first three months."

"I was sick the entire time I carried Karen."

"Well, maybe this one will be easier." Tricia had miscarried three times since Karen was born. Bill cast his eyes down as he ladled gravy over his chunk of beef and mashed potatoes.

"Good dinner, hon."

Karen watched intently. She didn't know mashed potatoes could move.

"What do you think of Jason?" Bill said between rounds of chewing. They had been discussing baby names for the last week. Both of them had long ago agreed the new child would be a boy and no female names were even hinted at.

"Oh, no!"

"Why not?"

"Because of those awful *Friday the 13th* movies."

"Good point! Can't name the kid after a psychopath."

"You've got something on your chin, Bill." Tricia sighed wearily.

"What?" He paused in his vigorous chewing momentarily and patted his chin. The gravy residue hanging there came away on his fingers like congealed brown-gravy spittle. Embedded in the mess was a long strand of something meat-like. Bill examined it several seconds before his mind grasped what it was.

It was the tail of a mouse.

"I'll be a—" Bill said, his mouth full of half-masticated chunks. Karen stared; her father's mouth seemed like a cave; his morsel-speckled tongue was a funny animal. It even had a head on it.

When Bill realized what he had been eating, he spent more time in the bathroom that evening than his wife ever had.

Karen wondered whether she should be glad or afraid. Her father rarely took kindly to things that upset his norm.

V.

Karen had three mice lined up on her pillow. One was pink and long; the second was blue and fat; the third was gray and very small. She kissed all three mice and made Tessie do the same. The third mouse seemed to shiver at the touch of the doll's cool plastic lips.

"What happened at dinner?" Karen demanded, imagining herself scowling like Daddy did sometimes when he looked at her.

No one offered an answer.

"What happened?"

She queried the blue mouse first, since it was always the most impertinent and she liked to catch it off-guard. "*Answer* me, Melissa!"

The pink mouse was nonchalantly silent; the gray mouse seemed uncomfortable.

"You must be punished." She grabbed the blue mouse, and tore off its left ear; the right one was already missing. "All right, you." She addressed the pink mouse, while casting a sideways glance at the gray one.

The pink mouse remained mute.

"You'll pay for this. Are you sassing me?"

No answer.

"*Are you?*"

She bent closer to the mouse.

"I think you *are* sassing me!"

She snatched the mouse from the pillow and threw it across the room. It bounced off the television and landed belly-up on the floor. Its wind-up mechanism activated and the internal music box began to play a Brahms lullaby.

"Now, *you*!"

The gray mouse had run away.

Later, Karen found out Ted had nothing at all to do with it. It was his sister, Theresa.

She had sacrificed herself to make a point.

VI.

"Mice are awful little vermin," Bill said as he placed a mouse trap behind the refrigerator. "They're not cute at all, not lovable like cartoon mice, or what you see in the funny papers. They eat and chew and get in food and leave their droppings everywhere. They're unclean. Filthy. They're cat fodder! People in other countries laugh at us for making them cute things. They build their nests wherever they like—and they might build one in your *hair*, if you're not careful. Besides, these mice are upsetting your mother, and she's in no condition to be upset."

Karen watched her father's face for the grimace he passed off as a smile. That expression usually accompanied such an obvious daddy-joke, but no smile appeared. He was too busy with the traps. He had three more to put about the house. He had bought four of them at K-Mart at seventy-seven cents a pair.

"I'm making a kind of stew on each of these. Cheese doesn't really do the trick, you know. It works, but mice eat cheese only out of desperation. They prefer bacon or peanut butter. I use both—plus a piece of corn flake for roughage. In fact, the mouse's last meal is pretty balanced. See? You smear it all on this little gizmo, then bend this over and carefully tuck it under there. Kind of neat.

"When the mouse takes a bite of the stew, this is released and it snaps on his neck, breaking it in two, just like a toothpick. The mouse might struggle a few seconds, but then it's over for good. Unless it catches him on the leg. Then he might have to chew his leg off to escape."

Karen shivered. "I don't like it. It's not fair to the mouse."

"You don't have to be fair to mice. They don't deserve it. They're mindless little rodents with no particular purpose except to cause people trouble."

"They are not!"

"You can quit that little act right now. Go get dressed for bed and leave me alone. I can see you're not interested in learning anything new tonight."

Karen stamped her feet and grunted. Then she went upstairs. On her way to the room, she passed her mother, who was in the bathroom, down on her knees throwing up in the toilet. It was such a common sight Karen no longer had a sympathetic reaction. She paused in the doorway when her mother took a momentary rest between bouts of sickness.

"Mom, Daddy says the mice are upsetting you."

"Yes, dear."

"Does that mean we have to—to kill them?"

"Your father knows what has to be done."

"But they don't really upset you, do they?"

Tricia sighed. "Yes, they do—and you're upsetting me now. Got to. . ." Another wave of sickness overcame her and Karen turned away, confused.

She hurried along to her room, hoping Ted would be waiting for her. She needed to talk.

VII.

"I caught four of them."

"Great," Tricia said, sipping tentatively at a cup of lukewarm coffee.

"You should've seen them!"

"Bill, don't—"

"One of them was—"

"Bill!"

"I'll have to get more traps."

Tricia rushed out, barely making it to the downstairs bathroom.

Karen remained silent. She poked at her scrambled eggs, picking the pepper off them. Then she lifted the corner of a piece of toast and looked. Nothing hiding under there.

"Quit playing with your food," her father said.

"It's cold."

"It wouldn't be if you'd eaten it in the first place."

"It's icky, now."

"Eat it anyhow."

"I *can't*."

Her father's eyes were icy.

"It's because of the mice, isn't it?"

Karen looked away.

"You think I'm some kind of monster for killing the mice, because *you* think they're cute. They're not pets, Karen. They're disgusting."

Tricia returned to the kitchen and sat at the counter watching her husband and child in the breakfast nook. There seemed to be a confrontation of some kind going on, but she was too sick to care.

"Are you going to eat your food now?" Bill demanded.

"It makes me sick," Karen said. "Too much pepper."

"All right; that's it."

"Don't do anything, Bill. She's just a child."

"Don't countermand my discipline, Tricia. I'm just going to educate her in certain little facts of life. She's been too much of a Miss Smarty-Pants lately."

"*Don't*—"

"Come on, Karen. I want to show you something in the garage, before the trashmen take it away."

"I don't want to."

"Don't make me get you up!"

"Oh, all right." She glanced at her mother, who offered no escape. Then she let her father guide her into the garage, which still had a lingering smell of fresh cut lumber in it that tickled her nose.

Bill opened a trash bag and pulled out a paper grocery sack. It rattled as he lifted it, and the rattle was punctuated by a *flop-thump* sound.

"I'm showing you this for your own good."

"What?"

"Just wait. I want you to see for yourself." He opened the sack and dumped its contents on the concrete floor. Four mousetraps, each with a resident defunct mouse, spilled out with a clatter. One of the traps slid across the floor and landed between Karen's feet.

She screamed a long time when she recognized the torn creature in the trap.

VIII.

Karen didn't go to school that day. After she finished crying, she lay around her room watching television a long time, while her mother alternately slept and threw up. She refused to tell her parents the

(continued on page 65)

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How to Make a Demon

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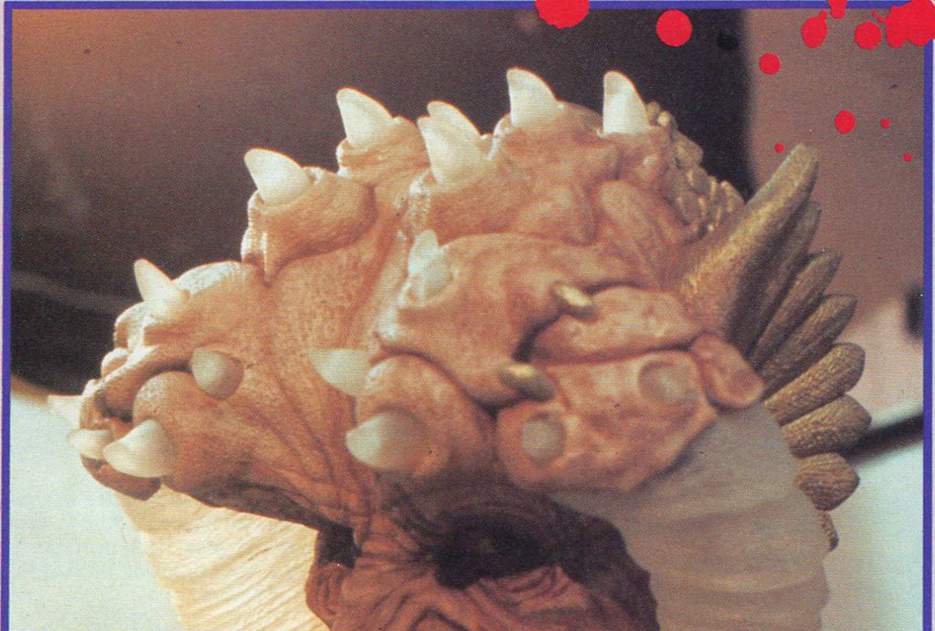

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By DOUG DREXLER

It's high time we breezed over some lab work, isn't it? I remember first starting out, discovering Richard Corson's *Stage Makeup* and within its volume, photos of Dick Smith assembling his historic *Little Big Man* makeup. I breathlessly savored every dot of every photo. Man, I hijacked an opaque projector and blew those pictures up to mural size. I was looking for labels! Studying those photographs and pondering Dick's technique was exciting.

In this installment of our column, we'd like to present—in the same spirit as that classic Smithian pictorial—a photo journal of our own. Perhaps, in some small way, we can recreate for someone out there the excitement of putting a makeup together.

PHOTO 1: Not too long ago, John Caglione and I worked on an obscure little film called *My Demon Lover*. Not exactly *Gone With the Wind*, but it did allow us to give flight to imagination and design some far-out critters. Our favorite, hands down, was the Pee-wee demon: Fourteen pieces of untamed rubber comin' at ya, no mere bag of shells. How do you make a monster like that? Where do you begin?

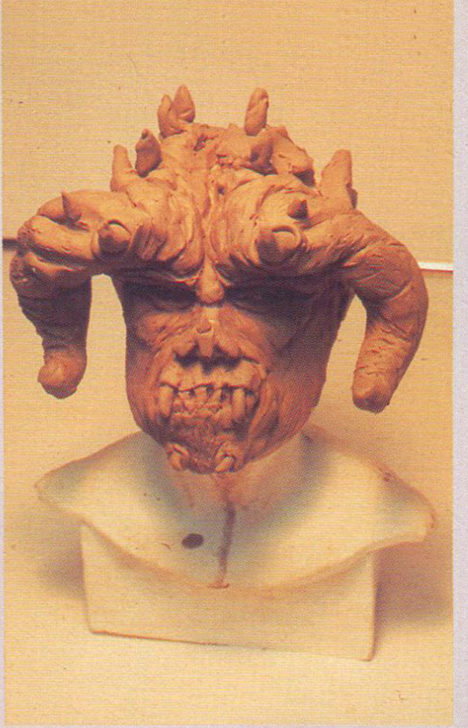
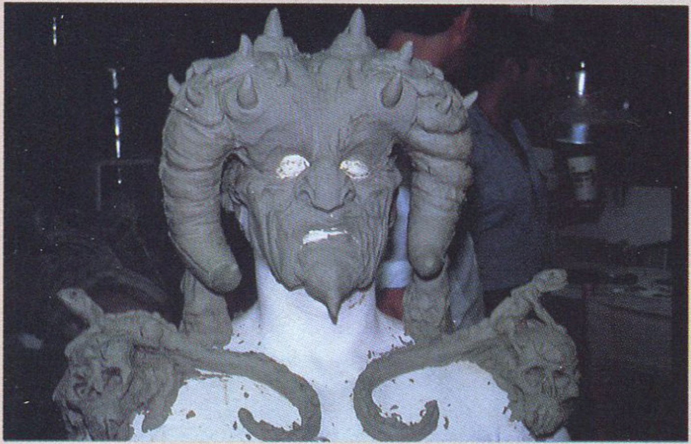


PHOTO 2: Well, speaking for ourselves, at the outset of each job we set aside a week or two just to brainstorm and play with concepts. *My Demon Lover* presented some fertile soil, and we planted a few special seeds which we lovingly cultivated. Early on, we settled the direction of our design ethic. Keeping in mind that *My Demon Lover* was a comedy genre spoof, the thrust of our designs would reflect this. While it was our intention that Pee-wee not be outrightly laughable, we did feel there should be an undercurrent of fun about him. It was equally important that he be frightening.

Pee-wee is a man who loves his job and revels in his evil, in contrast to Scott Valentine's character Kaz, who is suffering a curse. Since Pee-wee is a demonic shapeshifter and obviously in control, we felt he deserved an elegant, decorative quality. Peewee is literally a self-made man, unlike Kaz, who is sort of an unmade man. Kaz is ugly for ugly's sake; Pee-wee is not ugly, he is fearsome.

Photo Two represents but one of many ideas for Pee-wee, this maquette coming closest to his final concept.

PHOTO 3: OK, so John's excited. "No prisoners!" he cries, attacking the clay with unbridled fury. He concentrates on the folds of the face, while I become obsessed with fashioning the demonic headdress and snazzy lizard epaulets.



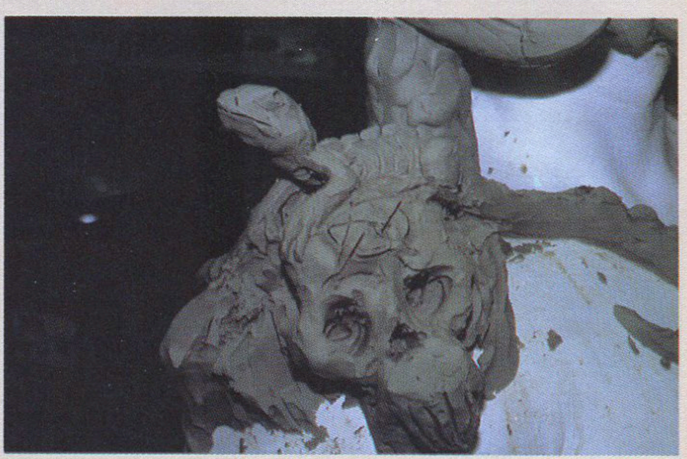


PHOTO 4: Now we're getting somewhere. Everything is blocked out, and the fun begins! Since we have established Pee-wee's prosthetic girth, we are free to go ahead and refine. We polish with impunity!

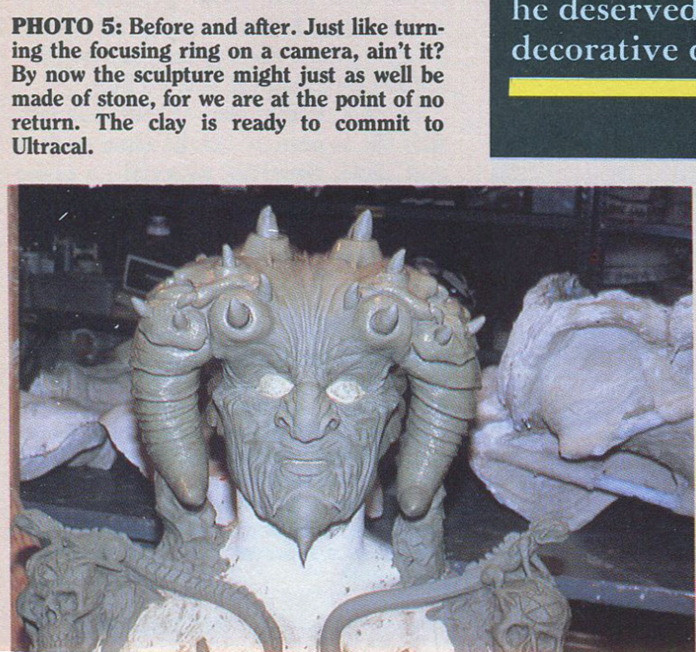
PHOTO 5: Before and after. Just like turning the focusing ring on a camera, ain't it? By now the sculpture might just as well be made of stone, for we are at the point of no return. The clay is ready to commit to Ultracal.

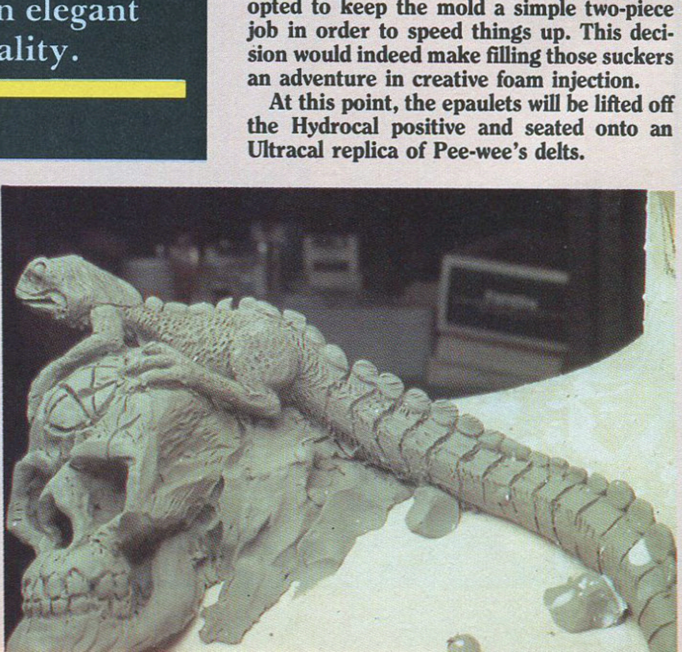
> Since Pee-wee is a demonic shape-shifter and obviously in control, he deserved an elegant decorative quality.

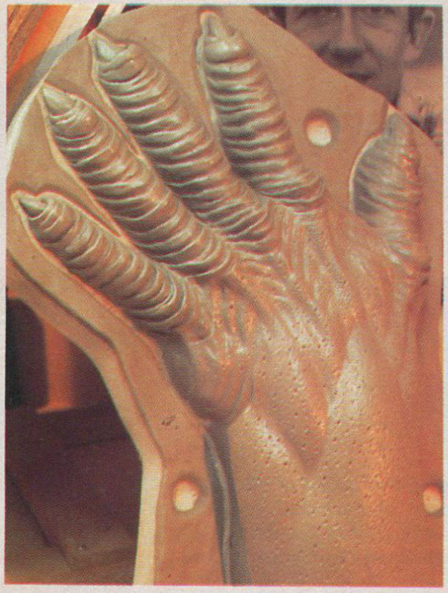
PHOTO 6: Since you loved that before-and-after gag so much, we figured a double dose could do nothing but good! Let's turn the ol' focusing ring one more time and thrill again to the concept of before . . .

PHOTO 7: . . . and after! Although Peewee's epaulets were rather convoluted, we opted to keep the mold a simple two-piece job in order to speed things up. This decision would indeed make filling those suckers an adventure in creative foam injection.

At this point, the epaulets will be lifted off the Hydrocal positive and seated onto an Ultracal replica of Pee-wee's delts.







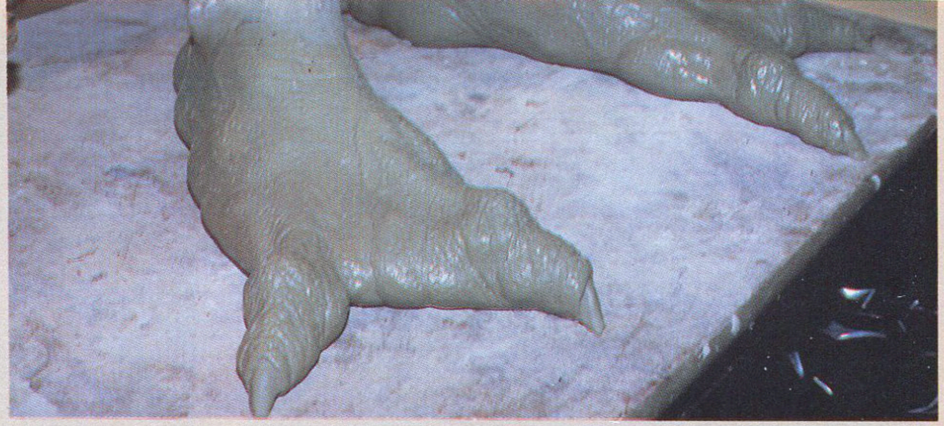


PHOTO 8: Jovial John Caglione, finished with Pee-wee's fearful countenance, moved onto modelling the monster's digits. Sculpted directly onto an Ultracal positive, they were envisioned by John as electrodes capable of discharging bolts of energy with deadly accuracy. We would embellish this idea by gilding the ringlets in metallic gold.

PHOTO 9: Having given Pee-wee a hand, John had a leg up on things. Therefore, it was only natural that his next sculpture would foot the bill nicely. Completed, a three-piece Ultracal negative was thrown, with the foot/core floating within. Its only contact with the negative was the mold's cutting edge and keys which fall across the core's ankle.

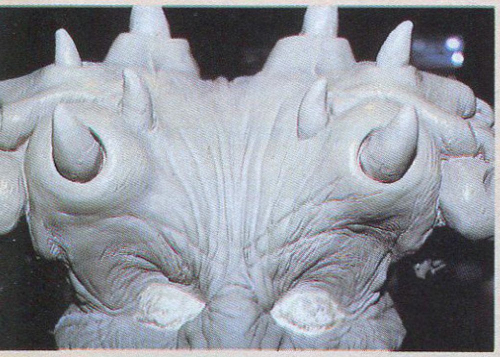


PHOTO 10: Behold the brassy notes of Pee-wee's horn section. As with most complicated makeups, the sculpture must be divided up and placed onto smaller Ultracal positives. In return, you get better-fitting foam latex pieces. Remember, the larger the piece, the greater the shrinkage. Furthermore, sectioning these things simplifies foam injection and provides for a better blending edge.

PHOTO 11: So whattaya do? You go back to the life cast and fabricate some negative snap molds of the big fella's features in white Hydrocal. You need an eye for undercuts when making these babies, because you are pouring two rigid materials against one another—if caution is not exercised, even the dinner bell won't get 'em apart! From these Hydrocal negatives of Pee-wee's face come brand-new Ultracal positives onto which the sectioned clay pieces will be seated.

PHOTO 12: Aha! Observe the courageous makeup artist finalize the transplant of Pee-wee's horn section onto its very own Ultracal positive. This portion of the sculpture could have been further broken down to facilitate foam latex injection—but *noooooo*! Filling the twists and contortions of this thing would later prove to make grown men cry. Ultimately, we had to fill the mold in sections, allowing each to set before moving onto the next. By God, we would prevail!

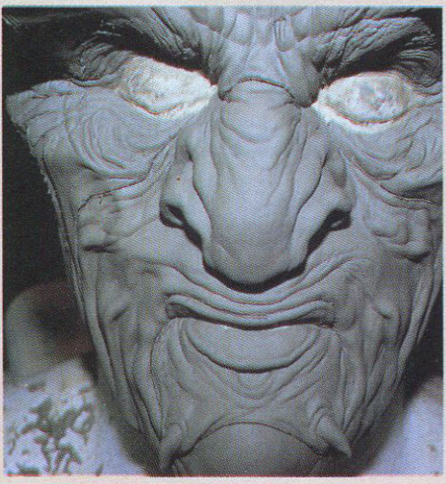


PHOTO 13: Oooooh! A beauty shot of John's facial work steps up to take its place. (Appy-polly-loggies to you *Nightmare* fans out there, but Freddy is a wimp, man!) Let's illustrate another section mold, OK? We're gonna cut this baby up and transfer it to a custom Ultracal positive . . .

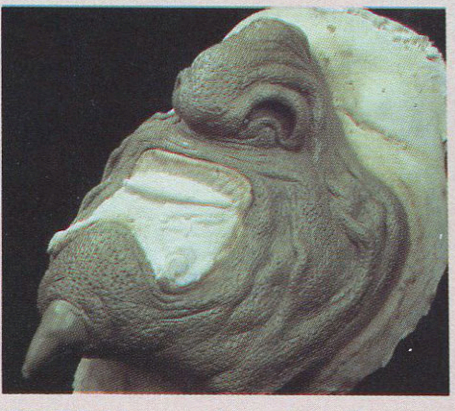


PHOTO 14: . . . and here it is. That gray area surrounding the mouth is part of the Ultracal. For a better fit, we sectioned the lips into still smaller molds and cast them as intrinsic parts of the facial positive seen here. In this way, the facial appliance would be applied following and blending up onto the lips, assuring the perfect integration and a better fit around the critical mouth area.

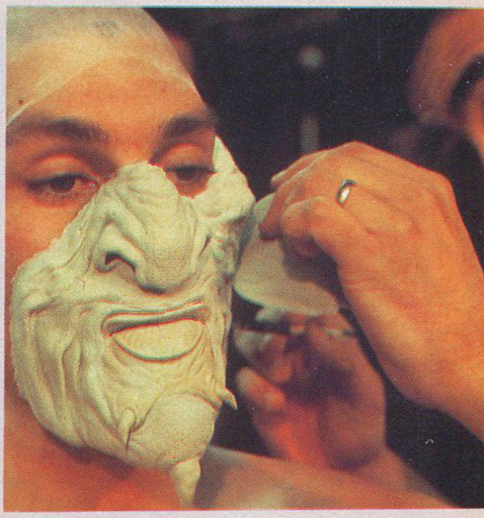


PHOTO 15: Just like we told you, this shot illustrates the lips and facial piece planted on the host human. John, with a little dynamic digital dexterity, finesses a cheek appliance. (*Awright, John!*)

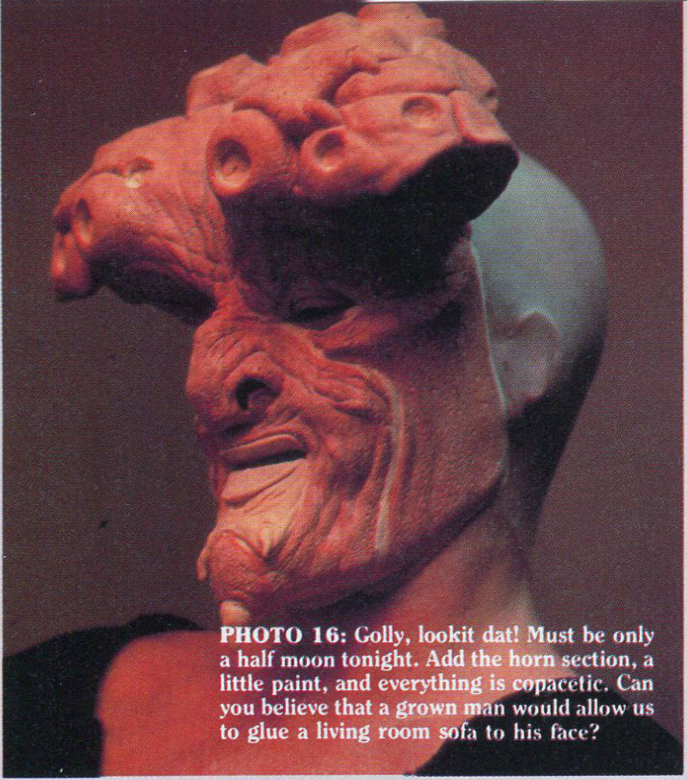


PHOTO 16: Golly, lookit dat! Must be only a half moon tonight. Add the horn section, a little paint, and everything is copacetic. Can you believe that a grown man would allow us to glue a living room sofa to his face?

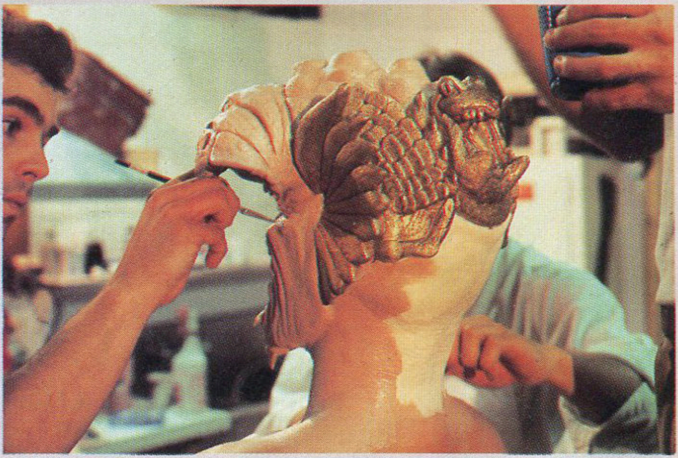


PHOTO 19: *Pastafazoola*! I've heard of gilding the lily, but gilding the *monster*? That kooky gingerbread enhanced Pee-wee's high opinion of himself, and with golden epaulets in place, the guy would have made a grand doorman at the Hades Hilton!

Filling the twists and contortions of this thing would later prove to make grown men cry.

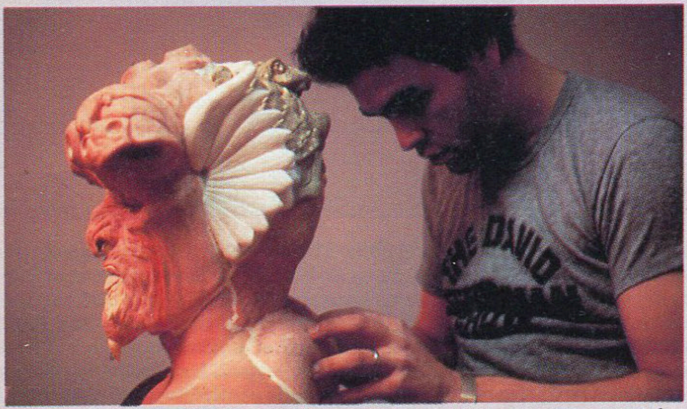


PHOTO 17: Next on the agenda, Pee-wee's wings are smartly slapped in place, and John secures the big fella's hump appliance.

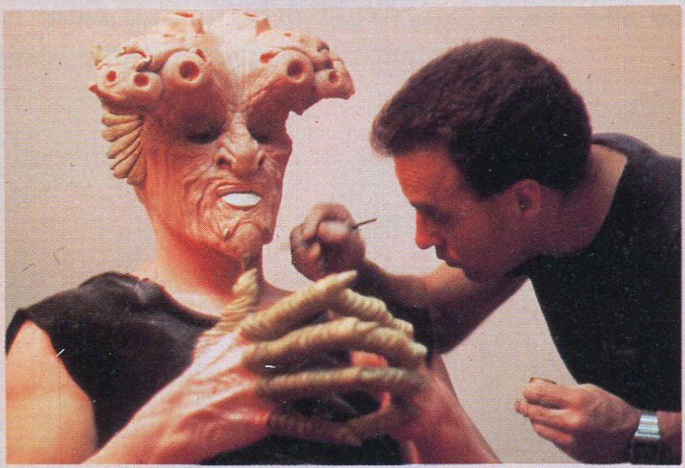


PHOTO 18: Doug gets into the act and discovers that a little dab'll do ya. Most importantly, note the emplacement of Pee-wee's hand appliances. (Here is the church and here is the steeple, open the doors and out come the people.)

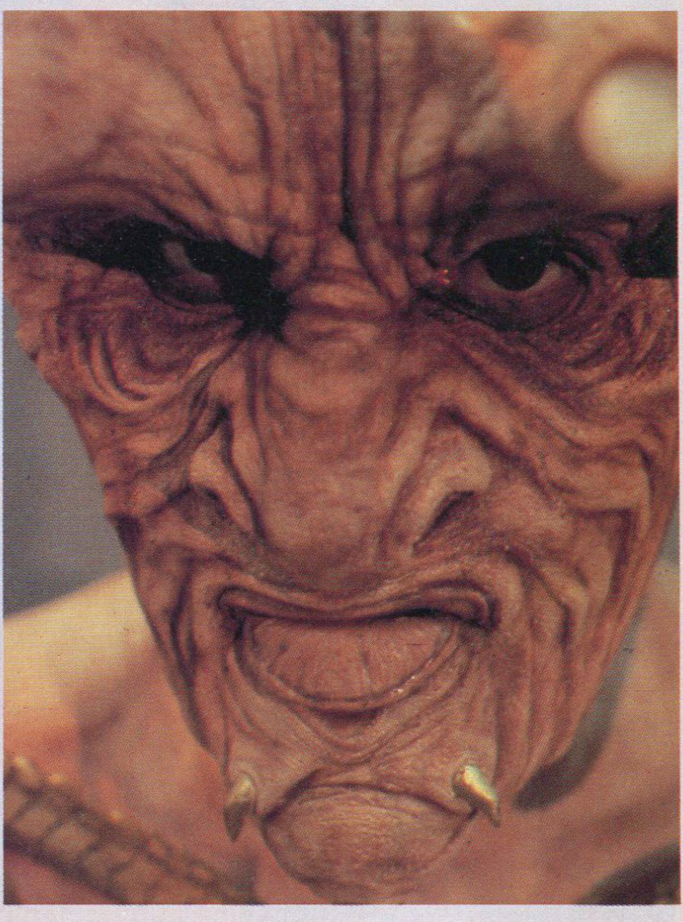


PHOTO 20: *"Don't you be eyeballin' me, chump!"*

Hope this pictorial raised more questions than it answered. If so, consider it a good sign! And if you don't have an opaque projector, I've got one with only a few thousand miles on it I can let you have cheap. But seriously, folks, if you do brew some specific questions, send them to us in care of this magazine (475 Park Avenue South, NY, NY 10016) and we'll run a forum in an upcoming issue.

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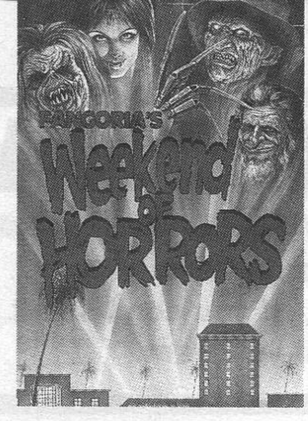

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Inside the Mad Professor's Mind

Jim Kisner, whose latest creepy creation occupies this portion of the present issue, operates a combination workshop and mad professor's laboratory. It simmers somewhere between his shaggy sideburns, over the deceptively soft and quizzical blue orbs, well above his shaggy mustache and slouching body that looks hastily assembled of Silly Putty. What you see of the Hoosier native suggests a taciturn and moodier Mark Twain, an even more rumpled, marginally weirder Vonnegut. (Kurt, too, is from Indiana, so maybe my parents were right when they said fluoridated water does strange things to us.)

But it's what goes on *inside* James Kisner's cranial workshop/lab that scares the crap out of you. After four decades of what passes for life in Evansville and Indianapolis, he has an attractive wife, girl-and-boy twins, a real house, and a brain overflowing with vaguely animal things that aren't quite right. There are inexplicable infants which any species can give birth to, even though they all look alike; that's "The Litter" in *Masques II*, a real contender for a Horror Writers of America award. A lynch mob that used haunted rope populates his current published novel, *Strands*. His hardcover novel, *Nero's Vice*, manages to mix science fiction, mystery, history and horror into a somewhat erotic and witty literary stew. And how about homicidal hobos nobody notices until they tear your throat out ("The Willies," in the forthcoming *Masques III*)?

Now that I think about it, most of Jim Kisner's fiction (he refuses to be crammed into a category; presently he's working on a techno-thriller, a horror novel and a review-and-interview column for Ed Gorman's first-rate *Mystery Scene* magazine) deals with beings no one is quite aware of. Asked to create a story based on the *Phantom of the Opera* for an upcoming anthology edited by Martin and Roz Greenberg, Jim rediscovered the lonely, music-loving Phantom . . . on another planet, deep inside a cave! It's as if the more imaginative realms of the minds of Vonnegut, Twain, Phil Dick, Clive Barker and Joe Lansdale had called a convention and decided to collaborate.

Except that the skill that makes such diffuse elements work wonderfully—and makes readers wonder—is all Jim Kisner's.

—*J.N. Williamson*

MICE

(continued from page 55)

real reason she was upset. She let them believe it was the sight of a dead mouse.

That was silly of them; she'd seen dead things before. Never, though, a dead friend.

By noon, Karen was quite bored. She turned off the television and devoted several minutes to mourning her loss. Mourning was a new experience for her; she had felt great sadness before, but never the loss of a loved one.

In some ways, it was an exquisite emotion.

She bowed her head solemnly as she had seen people do in funerals on TV and sat on her bed thinking of the departed and how he had been in life. It made her feel better very quickly. When she looked up, she saw the end of her bed was occupied by a gathering of several mice. They seemed rather motionless for mice; as if they might also be mourning. She realized suddenly they were friends and family of the deceased.

Yet one of them was disturbingly familiar. She stared at him several long seconds in disbelief. It couldn't be—

"I thought you were dead!" she exclaimed.

The mouse ran around in a circle a few times, then stopped and sat up on its hind legs.

"It is you, Ted! I'm so happy." She paused and frowned. "Then *who* was that I saw?"

The mouse crawled over her knee, then up her arm. He had a cool feel to him; he was weightless and insubstantial.

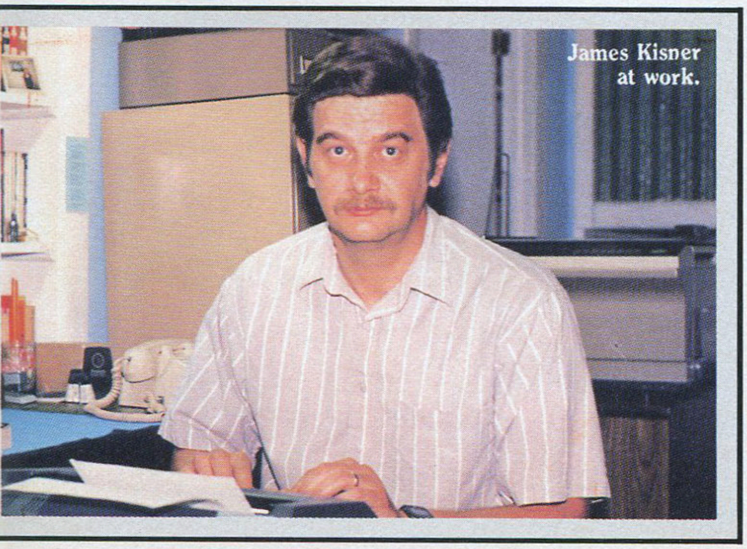
Karen understood now what the problem was.

IX.

Later in the evening, Karen's father noticed things were missing from the kitchen—a jar of peanut butter, a box of wheat cereal and half a pound of bacon.

He was going to take the matter up with the most obvious suspect, a certain someone who had been sent to bed without supper, but after he finished his own snack, he decided he was too tired. As soon as he was upstairs, he went promptly to bed.

He woke up with peanut butter between his toes.



James Kisner at work.

X.

Karen asked the mice to keep out of sight. They were upsetting Mother, and Mother would tell Daddy, and he would set even more traps. He might even buy poison.

"I'm your friend," she told the mice. "Listen to me and I'll keep you alive. You don't want to be like Ted. He has no fun at all anymore." She leaned toward the nearest mouse and offered food. "Here; have some bacon. Eat as much as you like. There's plenty more in the closet. Let me take care of you."

The mice did what Karen said.

After Bill Carlson cleaned the peanut butter from his feet, he noticed there were bites on his toes. They were small bites, but painful. He showed them to his wife and she declared them the works of spiders.

"Spiders! Why would spiders bite my toes?"

"How would I know? Maybe your toes are attractive to arachnids."

He regarded her quizzically. There was no humor in her tone or her expression. Her face was ghastly, pale and drawn, forever on the verge of sickness.

"This is silly, but I have to tell you about it: When I woke up there was . . . peanut butter on my toes."

"That *is* silly."

"It's gone now."

"The spiders ate it. End of mystery."

"Honestly, Tricia. Something *bit* me. Look." He swung his foot around, almost falling off the bed in the act.

"I don't want to see your dirty old foot." She covered her mouth and ran out of the room.

Bill sighed. He couldn't worry about his toes now. He was very late for work and wouldn't even have time for breakfast.

Karen would just have to eat alone.

XI.

The next morning Bill again awoke with food on his toes—and bites. And the next morning as well. He sprayed the bedroom with so much insecticide Tricia refused to sleep in it and made the living room sofa her bed. But no amount of insecticide seemed to make any difference.

One day he woke up and screamed.

There were bites all over his body.

XII.

Karen had lots of fun in her room with her friends. They played all day and nobody bothered them. Ted and his ghostly friends stayed close to her, providing spiritual comfort, while the rest of the mice—those who inhabited the dimensions of the living—capered around the room. Some of them even watched television. Most of them just danced, and had fun while Karen sang.

Karen had a great deal to be happy about.

Daddy had no toes. Mother had gone to the hospital and decided not to have a baby after all. And no one ever touched Karen. Daddy just didn't get angry any more—not like he used to. Not like in the old house, where there hadn't been any mice. He didn't shout or hit her now. He knew better.

As Karen sang and laughed and danced, she realized she had been right from the very beginning. Only nice things could happen in this house.

FUTURE SHOCK

Now that we've got the ball rolling, GOREZONE can concentrate on bringing you the kind of splatter news never available on the newsstand before. Upcoming issues will feature truly eye-opening (not to mention gouging) coverage.

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